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COMEDY
OF THE
SUSPICIOUS HUSBAND,

BY DR. HOADLY.

ADAPTED FOR THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,

As performed at the Theatres-Royal
COVENT-GARDEN AND DRURY-LANE.

Regulated from the Prompt Books,

By Permission of the Managers.

WITH THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR;

AND A CRITIQUE,

By R. CUMBERLAND, Esq.

The Lines distinguished by inverted Commas are omitted
in the Representation.

Cooke's Edition.



SUPERBLY EMBELLISHED.

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TO THE KING.

SIR,

YOUR Majesty's goodness, in permitting your royal name to stand before the following piece, is an instance of the greatest condescension of a great mind. And this permission, after having honoured the performance of it with your royal presence, the more sensibly touches me, as it will naturally lead every one to this reflection, that so great an honour would not have been allowed it, had it not appeared free from all offence against the rules of good-manners and decency.

Thus, while your Majesty sits as a watchful arbiter of the greatest affairs that ever perplexed Europe, you can descend to the innocent amusements of life, and take a pleasure in favouring an attempt to add to their number.

We see, with joy, in your Majesty an undeniable proof, that the true greatness and lustre of a prince is founded, not upon the magnificence of pomp, and show, and power, but upon the whole tenor of a conduct formed for securing and confirming the rights and happiness of his subjects. This being built upon public facts, will always remain plainly legible in the annals of history, when the traces of the most delicate flattery shall be all lost and gone.

When the records of our country shall barely tell the world the glorious appearance in this nation, upon a late trying occasion, and say—That upon a violent attack made upon your crown, all orders and degrees, all sects and parties amongst us, rose up as one man; not contenting themselves to offer their lives and fortunes in the sounds of formal addresses, but actually pouring out their treasures, and hazarding their persons—That your whole people did not think themselves safe without your safety; nor their religion, laws, and property secure, but in the secu-

rity of your royal person and government——When this shall be told——this alone, this voice of the public, expressed in deeds, will be the highest panegyric, greater and truer praise, than all the words which invention and art can suggest——But I forgot myself and my duty.

I ought not, upon the present occasion, to interrupt your cares for the public any farther than to express my deep sense of your royal favour and condescension; and to send up my warmest vows, that your Majesty may long enjoy the fruits of a conduct in government, which is the security to your subjects of all that is valuable upon earth; that you may live, through a course of many years, the delight of your happy people, the example, to all the princes around you, of political truth and justice, superior to all the little arts of fraud and perfidy; and that the succession to the crown of these realms, in your royal line, may never fail to establish and continue the blessings we enjoy to our latest posterity.

I am,

May it please your Majesty,

Your Majesty's most devoted and

Obedient subject and servant,

BENJAMIN HOADLY.



LIFE OF
BENJAMIN HOADLY, M.D.

DR. BENJAMIN HOADLY, eldest son of the bishop of Winchester, was born Feb. 10, 1705-6, in Broad-street; he was educated at Dr. Newcome's at Hackney, and Benet College, Cambridge, being admitted pensioner April 8, 1722, under the worthy archbishop Herring, then tutor there: here he took a degree in physic in 1727. He applied himself to mathematical and philosophical studies; and made a greater progress under the blind professor Saunderson than any young man then in the university. When his late Majesty was at Cambridge in April, 1728, he was to have been upon the list to be created doctors of physic; but, either by chance or management, his name was not found in the last list; and he had not his degree of M.D. till about a month after, by a particular mandamus. Through this transaction it appeared that Dr. Snape had not forgot or forgiven the name of Hoadly; for he not only behaved to him with great ill-manners, but obstructed him in it as much as lay in his power. He was F. R. S. very young, and had the honour of being made known to the learned world as a philosopher, by *A Letter from the Reverend Dr. Samuel Clarke to Mr. Benjamin Hoadly, F. R. S. occasioned by the present Controversy among Mathematicians concerning the Proportion of Velocity and Force in Bodies in Motion*. He was made registrar of Hereford while his father filled that see; and was appointed physician to his Majesty's household so early as June 9, 1742. It is remarkable, that he was

for some years physician to both the *households* together; having been appointed to that of the Prince of Wales, Jan. 4, 1745-6, in the place of Dr. Lamotte, a Scotchman with a French name (whom the prince had ordered to be struck out of the list, on his imprudent behaviour at the Smyrna coffee-house at the time of the rebellion, 1745), and with particular circumstances much to his honour: the prince, before the warrant could be finished, ordering the style to be altered, and that he should be called physician to the *household*, and not in *extraordinary*, as the other had been; observing, that this would secure that place to him in case of a demise, and be a prevention against any one getting over him. Not content with this, his Royal Highness voluntarily wrote a letter to the bishop—"that he was glad of this opportunity of giving him a token of his *gratitude* for "his services formerly to his family; and that he was "his *affectionate* FREDERICK, P."—This, being at a time when the families were not upon the best terms, is a proof that Dr. Hoadly was a most unexceptionable man. He was said to have filled the posts with *singular honour*. He married, 1. Elizabeth, daughter of Henry Betts, Esq. of Suffolk, counsellor at law, by whom he had one son, Benjamin, that died an infant; 2. Ann, daughter and co-heiress of the honourable general Armstrong, by whom he left no issue. He died in the life-time of his father, August 10, 1757, at his house at Chelsea, (since Sir Richard Glyn's) which he had built ten years before. He published, 1. *Three Letters on the Organs of Respiration, read at the Royal College of Physicians,*

London, A. D. 1737, being the Gulstonian Lectures for that year. To which is added an Appendix, containing Remarks on some Experiments of Dr. Houston, published in the Transactions of the Royal Society for the year 1736, by Benjamin Hoadly, M. D. Fellow of the College of Physicians, and of the Royal Society, London, 1740, 4to. 2. Oratio Anniversaria in Theatro Coll. Medicor. Londinensium, ex Harveii instituto habita, die 18^o Oct. A. D. 1742, a Benjamin Hoadly, M. D. Coll. Med. et F. R. S. 1742, esteemed very elegant Latin. 3. The Suspicious Husband, a Comedy, 8vo. 1747. 4. Observations on a Series of Electrical Experiments. By Dr. Hoadly and Mr. Wilson, F. R. S. 4to. 1756.

The doctor was, in his private character, an amiable humane man, and an agreeable sprightly companion. In his profession he was learned and judicious; and, as a dramatic writer, there needs no farther testimony of his merit, than his pleasing comedy, which, whenever represented, always gains applause.

THE EDITOR.



CRITIQUE

ON THE

SUSPICIOUS HUSBAND.

THE plot of this play is more than ordinarily complex. In fact, there are three distinct plots—those of Mr. and Mrs. Strictland, of Frankly and Clarinda, and of Bellamy and Jacintha. These, it must be confessed, are dexterously managed, and, by means of Ranger, so combined as to produce a variety of incidents, all tending to one end, and uniting to produce the catastrophe. This observation particularly applies to the fourth and fifth acts, which rise in interest to the end, and are much superior to the three first.

Notwithstanding, however, this effect produced by such an union of plots, it will be impossible to speak so favourably of them when they are separately considered. No cause whatever is assigned for Strictland's jealousy, the main hinge upon which the whole play turns. It is evident that he had never shewn any symptoms of it till within a day or two before the action of the drama begins, and then it was occasioned by a very inadequate cause—the acquaintance of his wife with a lady of virtue and unimpeached reputation. Nothing could have been more easy, than to have managed this differently; as it is, we must pronounce it a capital defect. Nor is the author's judgment in the conduct of this passion more to be commended. A husband, who finds a man's hat in his wife's chamber at midnight, may reasonably conclude that its owner had been there, especially when the discovery appears to overwhelm the lady

with confusion ; but Strictland's jealousy is instantly put to flight by a slight of hand, which even stage licence can hardly render probable, and he asks his wife's pardon as submissively as if he had not had any reason for suspicion. Directly afterwards, however, his jealousy breaks out with fresh fury, and without the slightest cause for it; for he actually turns his wife from home, and stigmatizes her as an adulteress in a letter to her brother, because—wonderful to say!—he had read a love-letter from Frankly to his mistress Clarinda. These inconsistencies are too glaring to be reconcilable to nature: for Strictland is not represented as a fool; though, in this instance, to what but folly in the extreme can his conduct be attributed?

Nor is the plot in which Frankly and Clarinda are concerned, much more to be commended: Can any thing be more improbable, than that a fashionable man, as Frankly is described to be, should see a beautiful and fashionable woman in the ball-room at Bath, should dance the whole evening with her, should fall in love with her, accompany her to her lodgings, and all this, without ever learning or enquiring after her name? Could it be possible that, after asking every body for two days who she was, he could gain no intelligence of a lady who drove away in a chariot and six? That the people where she lodged, nay, the very ladies who chaperon'd her to the ball, were equally unable to give him any account of her? Yet all this Frankly expressly tells us; and such must have been literally the case, otherwise the whole of this plot must have fallen to the ground, as its single

foundation is his ignorance of who she was, and where she might be met with.

The incidents of this comedy follow each other so rapidly, that it is not in my power to notice them as I could wish; but it is impossible to pass over the principal one, which occupies the whole of the third act, in which Ranger ascends by a ladder into Mrs. Strictland's apartment. This, let who will act it, is invariably applauded, yet can there be any thing so preposterous? Of all the rakes we have known or heard of, who, deliberately and without the slightest shadow of temptation, ever attempted mounting by a ladder into an upper room of a gentleman's house at night, in a public street, where, as in this instance, a number of people were passing? This is a sort of joke which, we might suppose, the fear of the gallows might prevent from being played; and it may reasonably be concluded, that the invention of a dramatic writer is at a very low ebb, when he thus leaves the verge of probability, and has recourse to a mere harlequin trick to carry his play through. Indeed the behaviour and language of Ranger, when he gets into the room, is much of a piece with his method of ascent. It must be remembered, that, though he is drawn as a gay, dissipated man of the town, he is also drawn as a gentleman. Let us see how far his conversation entitles him to that character. A small portion of this scene will prove it sufficiently. When Mrs. Strictland, an elegant and modest woman, in her own house too, reflecting on her husband's severity exclaims, "I am sure I never have deserved it of him!" he feelingly cries out—

“ Oh cuckold him by all means, madam! I’m your
“ man!” and, on her shrieking, he adds “ Oh fie!
“ madam, if you squall so cursedly, you’ll be dis-
“ covered.” She, naturally surprised at this elegant
address, answers, “ Discovered! what mean you, sir?
“ do you come to abuse me?” To which he replies,
“ I’ll do my endeavour, madam; you can have no
“ more.” Whatever Dr. Hoadly might have thought
of the propriety of such language to a lady, it is prob-
able there is hardly a girl of the town, who would
not have called to the watchman to take such a black-
guard ruffian to the round house. But Ranger’s be-
haviour to this innocent and unprotected woman ex-
actly corresponds with the delicacy of the language
he had employed. When he finds that her cries are
unheard (though that was extremely unlikely, as
her maid had left the room only a minute before),
he actually proceeds to violence, from the perpetra-
tion of which he is prevented merely by the ap-
proach of her husband.

To adorn a detestable character of this sort with
the specious happiness of careless good humour and
conviviality, is a shameful use of an author’s talents.
The majority of his auditors are more likely to fall in
love with those captivating qualities, than to perceive
the deformity which lurks under them; and, however
great may be the applause which attends the represen-
tation of his drama, there will be moments, when
solitary reflection will suggest to him what may be
its consequences, both to the world and to himself.

B

PROLOGUE.

Written by Mr. GARRICK.

*WHILE other culprits brave it to the last;
Nor beg for mercy till the judgment's past;
Poets alone, as conscious of their crimes,
Open their trials with imploring rhymes.
Thus cramm'd with flattery and low submission,
Each trite dull prologue is the bard's petition.
A stale device to calm the critic's fury,
And bribe at once the judges and the jury.*

*But what avail such poor repeated arts?
The whim'ring scribbler ne'er can touch your hearts;
Nor ought an ill-tim'd pity to take place—
Fast as they rise, destroy th' increasing race:
The vermin else will run the nation o'er—
By saving one you breed a million more.*

*Though disappointed authors rail and rage
At fancy'd parties, and a senseless age,
Yet still has justice triumph'd on the stage.
Thus speaks and thinks the author of to-day,
And, saying this, has little more to say.
He asks no friend his partial zeal to show,
Nor fears the groundless censures of a foe:
He knows no friendship can protect the fool,
Nor will an audience be a party's tool.
'Tis inconsistent with a free-born spirit,
To side with folly, or to injure merit.
By your decision he must fall or stand,
Nor, though he feels the lash, will blame the hand.*



Dramatis Personæ.

Mr. STRICTLAND.	Mrs. STRICTLAND.
FRANKLY.	CLARINDA.
BELLAMY.	JACINTHA.
RANGER.	LUCETTA.
JACK MEGGOT.	Landlady.
BUCKLE.	Milliner.
TESTER.	Maid
Servant to Ranger.	Chairmen, Footmen, &c.
SIMON.	

Scene, LONDON.

THE
SUSPICIOUS HUSBAND.

ACT I. SCENE I.

RANGER's Chambers in the Temple. A knocking is heard at the Door for some time; when RANGER enters, having let himself in.

Ranger. ONCE more I am got safe to the Temple. Let me reflect a little. I have sat up all night: I have my head full of bad wine, and the noise of oaths, dice, and the damn'd tinkling of tavern bells; my spirits jaded, and my eyes sunk in my head; and all this for the conversation of a company of fellows I despise. Their wit lies only in obscenity, their mirth in noise, and their delight in a box and dice. Honest Ranger, take my word for't, thou art a mighty silly fellow.

Enter a Servant with a wig dressed.

Where have you been, rascal? If I had not had the key in my pocket, I must have waited at the door in this dainty dress.

Serv. I was only below combing out your honour's wig.

Ran. Well, give me my cap.—*[Pulling off his wig.]* Why, how like a raking dog do you look, compared to that spruce, sober gentleman! Go, you batter'd devil, and be made fit to be seen.

[Throwing his wig to the Servant.]

Serv. God, my master's very merry this morning.

[Exit.]

Ran. And now for the law. *[Sits down and reads.]*

Tell me no more, I am deceiv'd,

That Chloe's false and common;

By Heav'n I all along believ'd,

She was a very woman.

As such I lik'd, as such caress'd;

She still was constant when possess'd:

She could do more for no man."

Honest Congreve was a man after my own heart.

Servants pass over the Stage.

Have you been for the money this morning, as I ordered you?

Serv. No, sir. You bade me go before you was up; I did not know your honour meant before you went to bed.

Ran. None of your jokes, I pray; but to business. Go to the coffee-house, and inquire if there has been any letter or message left for me.

Serv. I shall, sir.

Ran. [*Repeats.*]

*You think she's false, I'm sure she's kind,
I take her body, you her mind;
Which has the better bargain?*

Oh, that I had such a soft deceitful fair, to lull my senses to their desired sleep. [*Knocking at the door.*] Come in.

Enter SIMON.

Oh, Master Simon, is it you? How long have you been in town?

Sim. Just come, sir, and but for a little time neither; and yet I have as many messages as if we were to stay the whole year round, Here they are, all of them, [*Pulls out a number of cards.*] and among them one for your honour.

Ran. [*Reads.*] 'Clarinda's compliments to her cousin Ranger, and should be glad to see him for ever so little a time that he can be spared from the more weighty business of the law.' Ha, ha, ha! the same merry girl I ever knew her.

Sim. My lady is never sad, sir.

[*Knocking at the door.*]

Ran. Pry'thee, Simon, open the door.

Enter Milliner.

Well, child—and who are you?

Mil. Sir, my mistress gives her service to you, and has sent you home the linen you bespoke.

Ran. Well, Simon, my service to your lady, and let her know I will most certainly wait upon her. I am a little busy, Simon—and so—

Act I. THE SUSPICIOUS HUSBAND. 3

Sim. Ah, you're a wag, Master Ranger, you're a wag—but mum for that. [Exit.]

Ran. I swear, my dear, you have the prettiest pair of eyes—the loveliest pouting lips—I never saw you before.

Mil. No, sir! I was always in the shop.

Ran. Were you so. Well, and what does your mistress say?—The devil, fetch me, child, you looked so prettily, that I could not mind one word you said.

Mil. Lard, sir, you are such another gentleman! Why, she says, she is sorry she could not send them sooner. Shall I lay them down?

Ran. No child. Give 'em to me—Dear little smiling angel— [Catches and kisses her.]

Mil. I beg, sir, you would be civil.

Ran. Civil! Egad, I think I am very civil.

[Kisses her again.]

Enter a Servant, and BELLAMY.

Serv. Sir, Mr. Bellamy.

Ran. Damn your impertinence—Oh, Mr. Bellamy, your servant.

Mil. What shall I say to my mistress?

Ran. Bid her make half a dozen more; but be sure you bring them home yourself. [Exit Milliner.] Pshaw! Pox! Mr. Bellamy, how should you like to be serv'd so yourself?

Bel. How can you, Ranger, for a minute's pleasure, give an innocent girl the pain of heart I am confident she felt?—There was a modest blush upon her cheek convinces me she is honest.

Ran. May be so. I was resolv'd to try, however, had you not interrupted the experiment.

Ran. Fie, Ranger! will you never think?

Ran. Yes, but I can't be always a thinking. The law is a damnable dry study, Mr. Bellamy, and without something now and then to amuse and relax, it would be too much for my brain, I promise ye—But I am a mighty sober fellow grown. Here have I been at it these three hours, but the wenches will never let me alone.

Bel. Three hours! Why, do you usually study in such shoes and stockings?

Ran. Rat your inquisitive eyes! *Ex pede Herculem.* Egad, you have me. The truth is, I am but this moment return'd from the tavern. What, Frankly, here too!

Enter FRANKLY.

Fran. My boy, Ranger, I am heartily glad to see you; Bellamy, let me embrace you; you are the person I want; I have been at your lodgings, and was directed hither.

Ran. It is to him then I am oblig'd for this visit: but with all my heart. He is the only man, to whom I don't care how much I am oblig'd.

Bel. Your humble servant, sir.

Fran. You know, Ranger, I want no inducement to be with you. But—you look sadly—What—no merciless jade has—has she?

Ran. No, no! sound as a roach, my lad. I only got a little too much liquor last night, which I have not slept off yet.

Bel. Thus Frankly, it is every day. All the morning his head aches; at noon he begins to clear up; towards evening he is good company; and all night he is carefully providing for the same course the next day.

Ran. Why, I must own, my ghostly father, I did relapse a little last night, just to furnish out a decent confession for the day.

Fran. And he is now doing penance for it. Were you his confessor, indeed, you could not well desire more.

Ran. Charles, he sets up for a confessor with the worst grace in the world. Here has he been reprov-ing me for being but decently civil to my milliner. Plague! because the coldness of his constitution makes him insensible of a fine woman's charms, every body else must be so too.

Bel. I am no less sensible of their charms than you are, though I cannot kiss every woman I meet, or

fall in love, as you call it, with every face which has the bloom of youth upon it. I would only have you a little more frugal of your pleasures.

Fran. My dear friend, this is very pretty talking! But let me tell you, it is in the power of the very first glance from a fine woman utterly to disconcert all your philosophy.

Bel. It must be from a fine woman then, and not such as are generally reputed so. And it must be a thorough acquaintance with her too, that will ever make an impression on my heart.

Ran. Would I could see it once! For when a man has been all his life hoarding up a stock, without allowing himself common necessities, it tickles me to the soul to see him lay it all out upon a wrong bottom, and become bankrupt at last.

Bel. Well, I don't care how soon you see it. For the minute I find a woman capable of friendship, love, and tenderness, with good sense enough to be always easy, and good-nature enough to like me; I will immediately put it to the trial, which of us shall have the greatest share of happiness from the sex, you or I.

Ran. By marrying her, I suppose! Capable of friendship, love, and tenderness! ha, ha, ha! that a man of your sense should talk so. If she be capable of love, 'tis all I require of my mistress; and as every woman, who is young, is capable of love, I am very reasonably in love with every young woman I meet. My Lord Coke, in a case I read this morning, speaks my sense.

Both. My Lord Coke!

Ran. Yes, MY Lord Coke. What he says of one woman, I say of the whole sex; 'I take their bodies, you their minds! which has the better bargain?'

Fran. There is no arguing with so great a lawyer. Suppose, therefore, we adjourn the debate to some other time. I have some serious business with Mr Bellamy, and you want sleep, I am sure.

Ran. Sleep! mere loss of time, and hindrance of business—We men of spirit, sir, are above it.

Bel. Whither shall we go?

Fran. Into the park. My chariot is at the door.

Bel. Then if my servant calls, you'll send him after us. [*Exeunt.*]

Ran. I will. [*Looking on the card.*] 'Clarinda's compliments'—A pox on this head of mine; never once to ask where she was to be found. It's plain she is not one of us, or I should not have been so remiss in my inquiries. No matter; I shall meet her in my walks.

Servant enters.

Serv. There is no letter nor message, sir.

Ran. Then my things, to dress.

I take her body, you her mind;

Which has the better bargain? [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

A Chamber. Enter Mrs. STRICTLAND and JACINTHA meeting.

Mrs. Str. Good-morrow, my dear Jacintha.

Jac. Good-morrow to you, madam. I have brought my work, and intend to sit with you this morning. I hope you have got the better of your fatigue. Where is Clarinda? I should be glad if she would come and work with us.

Mrs. Str. She work! she is too fine a lady to do any thing. She is not stirring yet—we must let her have her rest. People of her waste of spirits require more time to recruit again.

Jac. It is pity she should be ever tired with what is so agreeable to every body else. I am prodigiously pleas'd with her company.

Mrs. Str. And when you are better acquainted, you will be still more pleas'd with her. You must rally her upon her partner at Bath; for I fancy part of her rest has been disturbed on his account.

Jac. Was he really a pretty fellow?

Mrs. Str. That I can't tell; I did not dance my-

self, and so did not much mind him. You must have the whole story from herself.

Jac. Oh, I warrant ye, I get it all out. None are so proper to make discoveries in love, as those who are in the secret themselves.

Enter LUCETTA.

Luc. Madam, Mr. Strickland is inquiring for you. Here has been Mr. Buckle with a letter from his master, which has made him very angry.

Jac. Mr. Bellamy said, indeed, he would try him once more, but I fear it will prove in vain. Tell your master I am here. [*Exit Luc.*] What signifies fortune, when it only makes us slaves to other people?

Mrs. Str. Do not be uneasy, my Jacintha. You shall always find a friend in me: but as for Mr. Strickland, I know not what ill temper hangs about him lately. Nothing satisfies him. You saw how he received us when we came off our journey. Though Clarinda was so good company, he was barely civil to her, and downright rude to me.

Jac. I cannot help saying, I did observe it.

Mrs. Str. I saw you did. Hush! he's here.

Enter Mr. STRICTLAND.

Strict. Oh, your servant, madam! Here I have received a letter from Mr. Bellamy, wherein he desires I would once more hear what he has to say. You know my sentiment; nay, so does he.

Jac. For Heaven's sake, consider, sir, this is no new affair, no sudden start of passion: we have known each other long. My father valued and loved him, and I am sure, were he alive, I should have his consent.

Strict. Don't tell me. Your father would not have you marry against his will; neither will I against mine: I am your father now.

Jac. And you take a fatherly care of me.

Strict. I wish I had never had any thing to do with you.

Jac. You may easily get rid of the trouble.

Strict. By listening, I suppose, to the young gentleman's proposals.

Jac. Which are very reasonable, in my opinion.

Strict. Oh, very modest ones truly; and a very modest gentleman he is that proposes them! A fool, to expect a lady of thirty thousand pounds fortune, should, by the care and prudence of her guardian, be thrown away upon a young fellow not worth three hundred a-year. He thinks being in love is an excuse for this; but I am not in love: what does he think will excuse me?

Mrs. Str. Well, but Mr. Strictland, I think the gentleman should be heard.

Strict. Well, well, seven o'clock is the time; and if the man has had the good fortune, since I saw him last, to persuade somebody or other to give him a better estate, I give him my consent, not else. His servants waits below: you may tell him I shall be at home. [*Exit Jac.*] But where is your friend, your other half, all this while? I thought you could not have breath'd a minute without your Clarinda.

Mrs. Str. Why, the truth is, I was going to see what makes her keep her chamber so long.

Strict. Look ye, Mrs. Strictland, you have been asking me for money this morning. In plain terms, not one shilling shall pass through these fingers, till you have cleared my house of this Clarinda.

Mrs. Str. How can her innocent gaiety have offended you? She is a woman of honour, and has as many good qualities—

Strict. As women of honour generally have. I know it, and therefore am uneasy.

Mrs. Str. But, sir—

Strict. But, madam—Clarinda, nor e'er a rake of fashion in England, shall live in my family to debauch it.

Mrs. Str. Sir, she treated me with so much civility in the country, that I thought I could not do less than invite her to spend as much time with me in town as her engagements would permit. I little imagined you could have been displeased at my having so agreeable a companion.

Strict. There was a time when I was company enough for leisure hours.

Mrs. Str. There was a time when every word of mine was sure of meeting with a smile; but those happy days, I know not why, have long been over.

Strict. I cannot bear a rival even of your own sex. I hate the very name of female friends. No two of you can ever be an hour by yourselves, but one or both are the worse for it.

Mrs. Str. Dear Mr. Strictland—

Strict. This I know, and will not suffer.

Mrs. Str. It grieves me, sir, to see you so much in earnest: but to convince you how willing I am to make you easy in every thing, it shall be my request to her to remove immediately.

Strict. Do it—hark ye—your request?—Why yours? 'tis mine—my command—tell her so. I will be master of my own family, and I care not who knows it.

Mrs. Str. You fright me sir—But it shall be as you please. [*In tears.*] [*Goes out.*]

Strict. Ha! have I gone too far? I am not master of myself. Mrs. Strictland. [*She returns.*] Understand me right. I do not mean by what I have said, that I suspect your innocence; but by crushing this growing friendship all at once, I may prevent a train of mischief which you do not foresee. I was, perhaps, too harsh, therefore do it in your own way: but let me see the house fairly rid of her. [*Exit Strict.*]

Mrs. Str. His earnestness in this affair amazes me; I am sorry I made this visit to Clarinda; and yet I'll answer for her honour. What can I say to her? Necessity must plead in my excuse—for at all events Mr. Strictland must be obeyed. [*Exit.*]

SCENE III.

St. James's Park. Enter BELLAMY and FRANKLY.

“*Fran.* Now, Bellamy, I may unfold the secret of my heart to you with greater freedom; for though Ranger has honour, I am not in a humour to be laugh'd at. I must have one that will bear with

“ my impertinence, soothe me into hope, and like a friend indeed, with tenderness advise me.

“ *Bel.* I thought you appeared more grave than usual.

“ *Fran.* Oh, Bellamy! my soul is full of joy, of pain, hope, despair, and ecstasy, that no word but love is capable of expressing what I feel.”

Bel. Is love the secret Ranger is not fit to hear? In my mind, he would prove the more able counsellor. And is all the gay indifference of my friend at last reduced to love?

Fran. Even so—Never was a prude more resolute in chastity and ill-nature, than I was fixed in indifference: but love has rais'd me from that inactive state above the being of a man.

Bel. Faith, Charles, I begin to think it has: but pray bring this rupture into order a little, and tell me regularly, how, where, and when.

Fran. If I was not most unreasonably in love, those horrid questions would stop my mouth at once; but as I am armed against reason—I answer—at Bath, on Tuesday, she danced and caught me.

Bel. Danced!—and was that all? But who is she? what is her name? her fortune? where does she live?

Fran. Hold! Hold! not so many hard questions. Have a little mercy. I know but little of her, that's certain; but all I do know, you shall have. That evening was the first of her appearing at Bath; the moment I saw her, I resolved to ask the favour of her hand; but the easy freedom with which she gave it, and her unaffected good humour during the whole night, gained such a power over my heart, as none of her sex could ever boast before. I waited on her home, and the next morning, when I went to pay the usual compliments, the bird was flown; she had set out for London two hours before, and in a chariot and six, you rogue!

Bel. But was it her own, Charles?

Fran. That I don't know; but it looks better than

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being dragg'd to town in the stage. That day and the next I spent in inquiries. I waited on the ladies who came with her; they knew nothing of her. So without learning either her name or fortune, I e'en call'd for my boots, and rode post after her.

Bel. And how do you find yourself after your journey?

Fran. Why, as yet, I own, I am but on a cold scent: but a woman of her sprightliness and gentility cannot but frequent all public places; and when once she is found, the pleasure of the chace will overpay the pains of rousing her. Oh, Bellamy! there was something peculiarly charming in her, that seemed to claim my further acquaintance; and if in the other more familiar parts of life she shines with that superior lustre, and at last I win her to my arms, how shall I bless my resolution in pursuing her.

Bel. But if at last she should prove unworthy——

Fran. I would endeavour to forget her.

Bel. Promise me that, Charles, [*Takes his hand.*] and I allow——But we are interrupted.

Enter JACK MEGGOT.

J. Meg. Whom have we here? My old friend Frankly! thou art grown a mere antique since I saw thee. How hast thou done these five hundred years?

Fran. Even as you see me; well, and at your service ever.

J. Meg. Ha! who's that?

Fran. A friend of mine. Mr. Bellamy, this is Jack Meggot, sir, as honest a fellow as any in life.

J. Meg. Pho! pr'ythee! pox! Charles——Don't be silly——Sir, I am your humble; any one who is a friend of my Frankly's, I am proud of embracing.

Bel. Sir, I shall endeavour to deserve your civility.

J. Meg. Oh, sir!——Well, Charles; what dumb? Come, come: you may talk, though you have nothing to say, as I do. Let us hear, where have you been?

Fran. Why, for this last week, Jack, I have been at Bath.

J. Meg. Bath! the most ridiculous place in life! amongst tradésmen's wives, that hate their husbands, and people of quality that had rather go to the devil than stay at home. People of no taste, no *goust*; and for *divertimenti*, if it were not for the puppet-show, *la vertu* would be dead amongst them. But the news, Charles; the ladies—I fear your time hung heavy on your hands, by the small stay you made there.

Fran. Faith, and so I did, Jack; the ladies are grown such ideots in love. The cards have so debauched their five sênses, that love, almighty love himself is utterly neglected.

J. Meg. It is the strangest thing in life, but it is just so with us abroad. Faith, Charles to tell you a secret, which I don't care if all the world knows, I am almost surfeited with the services of the ladies; the modest ories I mean. The vast variety of duties they expect, as dressing up to the fashion, losing fashionably, keeping fashionable hours, drinking fashionable liquors, and fifty other such irregular niceties, so ruin a man's pocket and constitution, that 'foregad, he must have the estate of a duke, and the strength of a gondolier, who would list himself into their service.

Fran. A free confession truly, Jack, for one of your coat.

Bel. The ladies are obliged to you.

Enter BUCKLE with a letter to BELLAMY.

J. Meg. Oh, Lard, Charles! I have had the greatest misfortune in life since I saw you; poor Otho, that I brought from Rome with me, is dead.

Fran. Well, well, get you another, and all will be well again.

J. Meg. No; the rogue broke me so much china, and gnaw'd my Spanish leather shoes so filthily, that when he was dead, I began not to endure him.

Bel. Exactly at seven! run back and assure him I will not fail. [*Exit Buckle.*] Dead! Pray, who was the gentleman?

J. Meg. This gentleman was my monkey, sir; an odd sort of a fellow that used to divert me, and pleased every body so at Rome, that he always made one in our *conversationi*. But, Mr. Bellamy, I saw a servant, I hope no engagement, for you two positively shall dine with me: I have the finest *macaroni* in life. Oblige me so far.

Bel. Sir, your servant; what say you, Frankly?

J. Meg. Pho! pox! Charles, you shall go. My aunts think you begin to neglect them; and old maids, you know, are the most jealous creatures in life.

Fran. Ranger swears they can't be maids, they are so good-natured. Well, I agree, on condition I may eat what I please, and go away just when I will.

J. Meg. Ay, ay, you shall do just what you will. But how shall we do? my post-chaise won't carry us all.

Fran. My chariot is here; and I will conduct Mr. Bellamy.

Bel. Mr. Meggot, I beg pardon; I can't possibly dine out of town; I have an engagement early in the evening.

J. Meg. Out of town? No, my dear, I live just by. I see one of the *dilettanti* I would not miss speaking to for the universe. And so I expect you at three.

[*Exit.*

Fran. Ha, ha ha! and so you thought you had at least fifty miles to go post for a spoonful of macaroni?

"*Bel.* I suppose then he is just come out of the country.

"*Fran.* Nor that neither. I would venture a wager, from his own house hither, or to an auction or two of old dirty pictures, is the utmost of his travels to-day; or he may have been in pursuit, perhaps, of a new cargo of Venetian tooth-picks."

Bel. A special acquaintance I have made to-day.

Fran. For all this, Bellamy, he has a heart worthy your friendship. He spends his estate freely; and you cannot oblige him more, than by shewing him how he can be of service to you.

Bel. Now you say something. It is the heart, Frankly, I value in a man.

Fran. Right—and there is a heart even in a woman's breast that is worth the purchase, or my judgment has deceived me. Dear Bellamy, I know your concern for me; see her first, and then blame me if you can.

Bel. So far from blaming you, Charles, that if my endeavours can be serviceable, I will beat the bushes with you.

Fran. That I am afraid will not do. For you know less of her than I: but if in your walks you meet a finer woman than ordinary, let her not escape till I have seen her. Wheresoe'er she is, she cannot long lie hid.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT II. SCENE I.

St. James's Park. Enter CLARINDA, JACINTHA, and Mrs. STRICTLAND.

Jacintha. Ay, ay, we both stand condemned out of our own mouths.

Cla. Why, I cannot but own, I never had a thought of any man that troubled me but him.

Mrs. Str. Then I dare swear, by this time, you heartily repent your leaving Bath so soon.

Cla. Indeed you are mistaken. I have not had one scruple since.

Jac. Why, what one inducement can he have ever to think of you again?

Cla. Oh, the greatest of all inducements, curiosity: let me assure you, a woman's surest hold over a man is to keep him in uncertainty. As soon as ever you put him out of doubt, you put him out of your power: but when once a woman has awaked his curiosity, she may lead him a dance of many a troublesome mile, without the least fear of losing him at last.

Jac. Now do I heartily wish he may have spirit enough to follow, and use you as you deserve. Such a spirit, with but a little knowledge of our sex, might put that heart of yours into a strange flutter.

Cla. I care not how soon. I long to meet with such a fellow. Our modern beaux are such joint-babies in love, they have no feeling; they are entirely insensible either of pain or pleasure, but from their own dear persons; and accordingly as we flatter, or affront their beauty, they admire or forsake ours: they are not worthy even of our displeasure; and, in short, abusing them is but so much ill-nature merely thrown away. But the man of sense, who values himself upon his high abilities; or the man of wit, who thinks a woman beneath his conversation—to see such the subjects of our power, the slaves of our frowns and smiles, is glorious indeed!

Mrs. Str. No man of sense or wit either, if he be truly so, ever did, or ever can, think a woman of merit beneath his wisdom to converse with.

Jac. Nor will such a woman value herself upon making such a lover uneasy.

Cla. Amazing! Why, every woman can give ease. You cannot be in earnest.

Mrs. Str. I can assure you she is, and has put in practice the doctrine she has been teaching.

Cla. Impossible! who ever heard the name of love mentioned without an idea of torment? But pray let us hear.

Jac. Nay, there is nothing to hear that I know of.

Cla. So I suspected, indeed. The novel is not likely to be long, when the lady is so well prepared for the *denouement*.

Jac. The novel, as you call it, is not so short as you may imagine. I and my spark have been long acquainted: as he was continually with my father, I soon perceived that he loved me; and the manner of his expressing that love was what pleased and won me most.

Cla. Well: and how was it? the old bait, flattery; dear flattery, I warrant ye.

Jac. No, indeed; I had not the pleasure of hearing my person, wit, and beauty painted out with forced praises; but I had a more sensible delight, in perceiv-

ing the drift of his whole behaviour was to make every hour of my time pass away agreeably.

Cla. The rustic! what did he never say a handsome thing of your person?

Mrs. Str. He did, it seems, what pleas'd her better; he flatter'd her good sense, as much as a less cunning lover would have done her beauty.

Cla. On my conscience you are well match'd.

Jac. So well, that if my guardian denies me happiness (and this evening he is to pass his final sentence), nothing is left but to break my prison, and fly into my lover's arms for safety.

Cla. Heyday! O' my conscience thou art a brave girl. Thou art the very first prude that ever had honesty enough to avow her passion for a man.

Jac. And thou art the first finish'd coquette who ever had any honesty at all.

Mrs. Str. Come, come; you are both too good for either of those characters.

Cla. And my dear Mrs. Strictland here, is the first young married woman of spirit who has an ill-natured fellow for a husband, and never once thinks of using him as he deserves—Good Heaven! If I had such a husband—

Mrs. Str. You would be just as unhappy as I am!

Cla. But come now, confess—do not you long to be a widow?

Mrs. Str. Would I were any thing but what I am!

Cla. Then go the nearest way about it. I'd break that stout heart of his in less than a fortnight. I'd make him know—

Mrs. Str. Pray be silent. You know my resolution.

Cla. I know you have no resolution.

Mrs. Str. You are a mad creature, but I forgive you.

Cla. It is all meant kindly, I assure you. But since you won't be persuaded to your good, I will think of making you easy in your submission, as soon as ever I can. I dare say, I may have the same lodging I had a st year: I can know immediately—I see my chair; and so, ladies both, adieu. [Exit.]

Jac. Come, Mrs. Strictland, we shall but just have time to get home before Mr. Bellamy comes.

Mrs. Str. Let us return then to our common prison. You must forgive my ill-nature, Jacintha, if I almost wish Mr. Strictland may refuse to join your hand where your heart is given.

Jac. Lord, madam, what do you mean?

Mrs. Str. Self-interest only, child. Methinks your company in the country would soften all my sorrows, and I could bear them patiently.

Re-enter CLARINDA.

Cla. Dear Mrs. Strictland—I am so confus'd and so out breath—

Mrs. Str. Why, what's the matter?

Jac. I protest you fright me.

Cla. Oh! I have no time to recover myself, I am so frightened, and so pleas'd. In short then, the dear man is here.

Mrs. Str. Here—Lord—Where?

Cla. I met him this instant; I saw him at a distance, turn'd short, and run hither directly. Let us go home.—I tell you he follows me,

Mrs. Str. Why, had you not better stay, and let him speak to you?

Cla. Ay!—But then—he won't know where I live, without my telling him.

Mrs. Str. Come then. Ha, ha, ha!

Jac. Ay, poor Clarinda!—*Allons donc.* [*Exeunt.*

Enter FRANKLY.

Fran. Sure that must be she! her shape and easy air cannot be so exactly copied by another. Now you young rogue, Cupid, guide me directly to her as you would the surest arrow in your quiver. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

Changes to the street before Mr. STRICTLAND's door.

Re-enter CLARINDA, JACINTHA, and Mrs. STRICTLAND.

Cla. Lord!—Dear Jacintha—for Heaven's sake make haste: he'll overtake us before we get in.

Jac. Overtake us! why, he is not in sight.

Cla. Is not he? Ha! Sure I have not dropt my twee—I would not have him lose sight of me neither. [*Aside.*]

Mrs. Str. Here he is——

Cla. In——In——In then.

Jac. [*Laughing.*] What without your twee?

Cla. Pshah! I have lost nothing——In, in I'll follow you. [*Exeunt into the house, Clarinda last.*]

Enter FRANKLY.

Fran. It is impossible I should be deceiv'd. My eyes, and the quick pulses at the heart, assure me it is she. Ha! 'tis she, by Heav'n! and the door left open too——A fair invitation, by all the rules of love. [*Exit.*]

SCENE III.

Changesto an Apartment in Mr. STRICTLAND's House.

Enter CLARINDA, FRANKLY following her.

Fran. I hope, madam, you will excuse the boldness of this intrusion, since it is owing to your own behaviour that I am forc'd to it.

Cla. To my behaviour, sir.

Fran. You cannot but remember me at Bath, madam, where I so lately had the favour of your hand——

Cla. I do remember, sir, but I little expected any wrong interpretation of my behaviour from one who had so much the appearance of a gentleman.

Fran. What I saw of your behaviour was so just, it would admit of no misrepresentation. I only feared, whatever reason you had to conceal your name from me at Bath, you might have the same to do it now; and though my happiness was so nearly concerned, I rather chose to venture thus abruptly after you, than be impertinently inquisitive.

Cla. Sir, there seems to be so much civility in your rudeness; that I can easily forgive it: though I don't see how your happiness is at all concerned.

Fran. No, madam! I believe you are the only lady, who could, with the qualifications you are mistress of, be insensible of the power they give you over the happiness of our sex.

Cla. How vain should we women be, if you gentlemen were but wise ! If you did not all of you say the same things to every woman, we should certainly be foolish enough to believe some of you were in earnest.

Fran. Could you have the least sense of what I feel whilst I am speaking, you would know me to be in earnest, and what I say to be the dictates of a heart that admires you ; may I not say that——

Cla. Sir, this is carrying the——

Fran. When I danced with you at Bath, I was charmed with your whole behaviour, and felt the same tender admiration ; but my hope of seeing you afterwards, kept in my passion till a more proper time should offer. You cannot therefore blame me now, if, after having lost you once, I do not suffer an inexcusable modesty to prevent my making use of this second opportunity.

Cla. This behaviour, sir, is so different from the gaiety of your conversation then, that I am at a loss how to answer you.

Fran. There is nothing, madam, which could take off from the gaiety with which your presence inspires every heart, but the fear of losing you. How can I be otherwise than as I am, when I know not but you may leave London as abruptly as you did Bath ?

Enter LUCETTA.

Luc. Madam, the tea is ready, and my mistress waits for you.

Cla. Very well, I come. [*Exit Lucetta.*] You see, sir, I am called away : but I hope you will excuse it, when I leave you with an assurance that the business which brings me to town, will keep me here some time.

Fran. How generous it is in you thus to ease the heart, that knew not how to ask for such a favour— I fear to offend—But this house, I suppose is your's ?

Cla. You will hear of me, if not find me here.

Fran. I then take my leave.

[*Exit.*]

Cla. I'm undone !—He has me !

*Enter Mrs. STRICTLAND.**Mrs. Str.* Well; how do you find yourself?*Cla.* I do find—that if he goes on as he has begun, I shall certainly have him without giving him the least uneasiness.*Mrs. Str.* A very terrible prospect indeed!*Cla.* But I must tease him a little—Where is Jacintha? how will she laugh at me, if I become a pupil of her's, and learn to give ease! No; positively I shall never do it.*Mrs. Str.* Poor Jacintha has met with what I feared from Mr. Strictland's temper—an utter denial. I know not why, but he really grows more and more ill-natur'd.*Cla.* Well; now do I heartily wish my affairs were in his power a little, that I might have a few difficulties to surmount: I love difficulties; and yet, I don't know—it is as well as it is.*Mrs. Str.* Ha, ha, ha! Come, the tea waits.[*Exeunt.*]*Enter Mr. STRICTLAND.**Strict.* These doings in my house distract me. I met a fine gentleman: when I enquired who he was; why, he came to Clarinda. I met a footman too, and he came to Clarinda. I shall not be easy till she is decamp'd. My wife had the character of a virtuous woman—and they have not been long acquainted: but then they were by themselves at Bath—that hurts—that hurts—they must be watch'd, they must; I know them, I know all their wiles, and the best of them are but hypocrites—Ha!—[*Lucetta passes over the stage.*] Suppose I bribe the maid; she is of their council, the manager of their secrets; it shall be so; money will do it, and I shall know all that passes. Lucetta!*Luc.* Sir.*Strict.* Lucetta!*Re-enter LUCETTA.**Luc.* Sir.—If he should suspect, and search me now, I'm undone.[*Aside.*]

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Strict. She is a sly girl, and may be serviceable.

[*Aside.*—Lucetta, you are a good girl, and have an honest face. I like it. It looks as if it carried no deceit in it—Yet, if she should be false, she can do me most harm. [*Aside.*

Luc. Pray, sir, speak out.

Strict. [*Aside.*] No; she is a woman, and it is the highest imprudence to trust her.

Luc. I am not able to understand you.

Strict. I am glad of it. I would not have you understand me.

Luc. Then what did you call me for?—If he should be in love with my face, it would be rare sport.

[*Aside.*

Strict. Tester, ay, Tester is the proper person.

[*Aside.*] Lucetta, tell Tester I want him.

Luc. Yes, sir.—Mighty odd, this! It gives me time, however, to send Buckle with this letter to his master. [*Aside. Exit.*

Strict. Could I but be once well satisfied that my wife had really finished me, I believe I should be as quiet as if I were sure to the contrary; but whilst I am in doubt I am miserable.

Enter TESTER.

Test. Does your honour please to want me?

Strict. Ay, Tester—I need not fear. The honesty of his service, and the goodness of his look, make me secure. I will trust him. [*Aside.*] Tester, I think I have been a tolerable good master to you.

Test. Yes, sir,—very tolerable.

Strict. I like his simplicity well. It promises honesty. [*Aside.*—I have a secret, Tester, to impart to you; a thing of the greatest importance. Look upon me, and don't stand picking your fingers.

Test. Yes, sir—No, sir.

Strict. But will not his simplicity expose him the more to Lucetta's cunning? Yes, yes; she will worm the secret out of him. I had better trust her with it at once.—So—I will. [*Aside.*—Tester, go, send Lucetta hither.

Test. Yes, sir.—Here she is.

Re-enter LUCETTA.

Lucetta, my master wants you.

Strict. Get you down, *Tester*.

Test. Yes, sir.

[*Exit.*

Luc. If you want me, sir, I beg you would make haste, for I have a thousand things to do.

Strict. Well, well; what I have to say will not take up much time, could I but persuade you to be honest.

Luc. Why, sir, I hope you don't suspect my honesty?

Strict. Well, well; I believe you honest.

[*Shuts the door.*

Luc. What can be at the bottom of all this? [*Aside.*

Strict. So; we cannot be too private. Come hither, hussy; nearer yet.

Luc. Lord, sir! You are not going to be rude. I vow I will call out.

Strict. Hold your tongue—Does the baggage laugh at me? She does; she mocks me, and will reveal it to my wife; and her insolence upon it will be more insupportable to me than cuckoldom itself.

[*Aside.*—I have not leisure now, *Lucetta*—Some other time—Hush! Did not the bell ring? Yes, yes; my wife wants you. Go, go, go to her. [*Pushes her out.*] There is no hell on earth like being a slave to suspicion.

[*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

The Piazza, Covent-Garden. Enter BELLAMY and JACK MEGGOT.

Bel. Nay, nay, I would not put your family into any confusion.

J. Meg. None in life, my dear, I assure you. I will go and order every thing this instant for her reception.

Bel. You are too obliging, sir; but you need not be in this hurry, for I am in no certainty when I shall trouble you; I only know that my *Jacintha* has taken such a resolution.

J. Meg. Therefore we should be prepared; for when once a lady has such a resolution in her head, she is upon the rack till she executes it. 'Foregad, Mr. Bellamy, this must be a girl of fire.

Enter FRANKLY.

Fran. "Buxom and lively as the bounding doe—
"Fair as painting can express, or youthful poets
"fancy when they love." Tol. de rol, lol!

[Singing and dancing.]

Bel. Who is this you talk thus rapturously of?

Fran. Who should it be but—I shall know her name to-morrow. *[Sings and dances.]*

J. Meg. What is the matter, ho? Is the man mad?

Fran. Even so, gentlemen; as mad as love and joy can make me.

Bel. But inform us whence this joy proceeds.

Fran. Joy! joy! my lads! She's found! my Perdita! my charmer!

J. Meg. Egad! her charms have bewitch'd the man, I think—But who is she?

Bel. Come, come, tell us, who is this wonder?

Fran. But will you say nothing?

Bel. Nothing, as I live.

Fran. Nor you?

J. Meg. I'll be as silent as the grave—

Fran. With a tomb-stone upon it, to tell every one whose dust it carries.

J. Meg. I'll be as secret as a debauched prude—

Fran. Whose sanctity every one suspects. Jack, Jack, 'tis not in thy nature; keeping a secret is worse to thee than keeping thy accounts. But to leave fooling, listen to me both, that I may whisper it into your ears, that echo may not catch the sinking sound—I cannot tell who she is, faith—Tol de rol, lol—

J. Meg. Mad! mad! very mad!

Fran. All I know of her is, that she is a charming woman, and has given me liberty to visit her again—Bellamy, 'tis she, the lovely she. *[Aside.]*

Bel. So I did suppose. *[To Frankly.]*

J. Meg. Poor Charles! For Heaven's sake, Mr. Bellamy, persuade him to go to his chamber, whilst I prepare every thing for you at home. Adieu.
[Aside to Bellamy.] B'ye, Charles; ha, ha, ha!

Fran. Oh, love! thou art a gift worthy of a god, indeed! dear Bellamy, nothing now could add to my pleasure, but to see my friend as deeply in love as I am.

Bel. I shew my heart is capable of love, by the friendship it bears to you.

Fran. The light of friendship looks but dim before the brighter flame of love: love is the spring of cheerfulness and joy. Why, how dull and phlegmatic do you shew to me now! whilst I am all life; light as feather'd Mercury—You, dull and cold as earth and water; I, light and warm as air and fire.—These are the only elements in love's world! Why, Bellamy, for shame! get thee a mistress, and be sociable.

Bel. Frankly, I am now going to—

Fran. Why that face now? Your humble servant, sir: My flood of joy shall not be stopp'd by your melancholy fits, I assure you. *[Going.]*

Bel. Stay, Frankly; I beg you stay. What would you say now if I really were in love?

Fran. Why, faith, thou hast such romantic notions of sense and honour, that I know not what to say.

Bel. To confess the truth then, I am in love.

Fran. And do you confess it as if it were a sin? Proclaim it aloud; glory in it; boast of it as your greatest virtue. Swear it with a lover's oath, and I will believe you.

Bel. Why then, by the bright eyes of her I love—

Fran. Well said!

Bel. By all that's tender, amiable, and soft in woman—

Fran. Bravo!

Bel. I swear, I am as true an enamorado as ever tagg'd rhyme.

Fran. And art thou then thoroughly in love? Come to my arms, thou dear companion of my joys—

[They embrace.]

Enter RANGER.

Ran. Why—Hey!—Is there never a wench to be got for love or money?

Bel. Pshaw! Ranger here?

Ran. Yes, Ranger is here, and perhaps does not come so impertinently as you may imagine. Faith! I think I have the knack of finding out secrets. Nay, never look so queer—Here is a letter, Mr. Bellamy, that seems to promise you better diversion than your hugging one another.

Bel. What do you mean?

Ran. Do you deal much in these paper tokens?

Bel. Oh, the dear kind creature; it is from herself.

[To Frankly.]

Ran. What is it a pair of laced shoes she wants? or have the boys broke her windows?

Bel. Hold your profane tongue!

Fran. Nay, pr'ythee, Bellamy, don't keep it to yourself, as if her whole affections were contained in those few lines.

Ran. Pr'ythee, let him alone to his silent raptures. But it is as I always said—your grave men ever are the greatest whoremasters.

Bel. I cannot be disobliged now, say what you will. But how came this into your hands?

Ran. Your servant Buckle and I changed commissions; he went on my errand, and I came on his.

Bel. 'Sdeath! I want him this very instant.

Ran. He will be here presently; but I demand to know what I have brought you.

Fran. Ay, ay! out with it! you know we never blab, and may be of service.

Bel. Twelve o'clock! oh, the dear hour!

Ran. Why, it is a pretty convenient time, indeed.

Bel. By all that's happy she promises in this letter here—to leave her guardian this very night—and run away with me.

Ran. How is this?

Bel. Nay, I know not how myself—she says at the bottom—'Your servant has full instructions from

‘ Lucetta, how to equip me for the expedition. I will
‘ not trust myself home with you to-night, because I
‘ know it is inconvenient; therefore I beg you would
‘ procure me a lodging, it is no matter how far off my
‘ guardian’s—— Yours, JACINTHA.’

Ran. Carry her to a bagnio, and there you may lodge with her.

Fran. Why, this must be a girl of spirit, faith!

Bel. And beauty equal to her sprightliness. I love her, and she loves me. She has thirty thousand pounds to her fortune.

Ran. The devil she has!

Bel. And never plays at cards.

Ran. Nor does any one thing like any other woman, I suppose.

Fran. Not so, I hope, neither.

Bel. Oh, Frankly, Ranger, I never felt such ease before; the secret’s out, and you don’t laugh at me.

Fran. Laugh at thee, for loving a woman with thirty thousand pounds? thou art a most unaccountable fellow.

Ran. How the devil could he work her up to this! I never could have had the face to have done it. But——I know not how——there is a degree of assurance in you modest gentlemen, which we impudent fellows never can come up to.

Bel. Oh! your servant, good sir. You should not abuse me now, Ranger, but do all you can to assist me.

Ran. Why, look ye, Bellamy, I am a damnable unlucky fellow, and so will have nothing to do in this affair: I’ll take care to be out of the way, so as to do you no harm; that’s all I can answer for; and so—success attend you. [*Going.*] I cannot leave you quite to yourself neither; for if this should prove a round-house-affair, as I make no doubt it will, I believe I may have more interest there than you; and so, sir, you may hear of me at—— [*Whispers.*]

Bel. For shame, Ranger! the most noted gaming-house in town.

Ran. Forgive me this once, my boy. I must go, faith, to pay a debt of honour to some of the greatest rascals in town. *[Exit.]*

Fran. But where do you design to lodge her?

Bel. At Mr. Meggot's—He is already gone to prepare for her reception.

Fran. The properest place in the world: his aunts will entertain her with honour.

Bel. And the newness of her acquaintance will prevent its being suspected.—Frankly, give me your hand: this is a very critical time.

Fran. Pho! none of your musty reflections now! When a man is in love, to the very brink of matrimony, what the devil has he to do with Plutarch and Seneca? Here is your servant, with a face full of business—I'll leave you together—I shall be at the King's Arms, where, if you want my assistance, you may find me. *[Exit.]*

Enter BUCKLE.

Bel. So, Buckle, you seem to have your hands full.

Buc. Not fuller than my head, sir, I promise you. You have had your letter, I hope.

Bel. Yes, and in it she refers me to you for my instructions.

Buc. Why, the affair stands thus. As Mr. Strickland sees the door lock'd and barred every night himself, and takes the key up with him, it is impossible for us to escape any way but through the window; for which purpose I have a ladder of ropes.

Bel. Good—

Buc. And because a hoop, as the ladies wear them now, is not the most decent dress to come down a ladder in, I have, in this other bundle, a suit of boy's clothes, which I believe will fit her; at least, it will serve the time she wants it.—You will soon be for pulling it off, I suppose.

Bel. Why, you are in spirits, you rogue.

Buc. These I am now to convey to Lucetta—Have you any thing to say, sir?

Bel. Nothing, but that I will not fail at the hour appointed. Bring me word to Mr. Meggot's how you go on. Succeed in this, and it shall make your fortune.
[*Exeunt.*]

ACT III. SCENE I.

The Street before Mr. STRICTLAND's House. Enter BELLAMY in a Chairman's coat.

Bellamy. How tediously have the minutes passed these last few hours! and the envious rogues will fly, no lightning quicker, when we would have them stay. Hold, let me not mistake—this is the house. [*Pulls out his watch.*] By Heaven, it is not yet the hour!—I hear somebody coming. The moon's so bright—I had better not be here till the happy instant comes.
[*Exit.*]

Enter FRANKLY.

Fran. Wine is no antidote to love, but rather feeds the flame: now am I such an amorous puppy, that I cannot walk straight home, but must come out of my way to take a view of my queen's palace by moonlight—Ay, here stands the temple where my goddess is adored—the doors open!
[*Retires.*]

Enter LUCETTA.

Luc. [*Under the window.*] Madam, madam, hist! madam—How shall I make her hear?

JACINTHA in Boy's clothes at the window.

Jac. Who is there? What's the matter?

Luc. It is I, madam; you must not pretend to stir till I give the word; you'll be discovered if you do—

Fran. [*Aside.*] What do I see? A man! My heart misgives me.

Luc. My master is below, sitting up for Mrs. Clarinda. He raves as if he were mad about her being out so late.

Fran. [*Aside.*] Here is some intrigue or other. I must see more of this before I give further way to love.

Luc. One minute he is in the street; the next he

is in the kitchen: now he will lock her out, and then he'll wait himself, and see what figure she makes when she vouchsafes to venture home.

Jac. I long to have it over. Get me but once out of his house.

Fran. [*Aside.*] Cowardly rascal! would I were in his place!

Luc. If I can but fix him any where, I can let you out myself—You have the ladder ready in case of necessity.

Jac. Yes, yes.

[*Erit Luc.*

Fran. [*Aside.*] The ladder! This must lead to some discovery; I shall watch you, my young gentleman, I shall.

Enter CLARINDA, and a Servant.

Cla. This whist is a most enticing devil. I am afraid I'm too late for Mr. Strictland's sober hours.

Jac. Ha! I hear a noise!

Cla. No; I see a light in Jacintha's window. You may go home. [*Giving the servant money.*] I am safe.

Jac. Sure it must be he! Mr. Bellamy—Sir.

Fran. [*Aside.*] Does he not call me?

Cla. [*Aside.*] Ha! Who's that? I am frightened out of my wits—A man!

Jac. Is it you?

Fran. Yes, yes; 'tis I, 'tis I.

Jac. Listen at the door.

Fran. I will; 'tis open—There is no noise: all's quiet.

Cla. Sure it is my spark—and talking to Jacintha.

Fran. You may come down the ladder—quick. [*Aside.*

Jac. Catch it then, and hold it.

Fran. I have it. Now I shall see what sort of mettle my young spark is made of.

Cla. With a ladder too! I'll assure you. But I must see the end of it.

Jac. Hark! Did not somebody speak?

Fran. No, no; be not fearful—'Sdeath! we are discover'd.
[*Frankly and Clarinda retire.*]

Enter LUCETTA.

Luc. Hist! hist! are you ready?

Jac. Yes, may I venture?

Luc. Now is your time. He is in high conference with 'his privy counsellor, Mr. Tester. You may come down the back-stairs, and I'll let you out.

[*Exit Luc.*]

Jac. I will, I will, and am heartily glad of it.

[*Exit Jac.*]

Fran. [*Advancing.*] May be so; but you and I shall have a few words before you get off so cleanly.

Cla. [*Advancing.*] How lucky it was I came home at this instant. I shall spoil his sport I believe. Do you know me, sir?

Fran. I am amazed! You here! This was unexpected indeed?

Cla. Why, I believe, I do come a little unexpectedly, but I shall amaze you more. I know the whole course of your amour, all the process of your mighty passion from its first rise——

Fran. What is all this!

Cla. To the very conclusion, which you vainly hope to effect this night.

Fran. By Heaven, madam, I know not what you mean; I came hither purely to contemplate on your beauties.

Cla. Any beauties, sir, I find will serve your turn. Did I not hear you talk to her at the window?

Fran. Her!

Cla. Blush, blush, for shame; but be assur'd you have seen the last both of Jacintha and me. [*Exit.*]

Fran. Jacintha! hear me, madam.—She is gone. This must certainly be Bellamy's mistress, and I have fairly ruin'd all his scheme. This it is to be in luck.

Enter BELLAMY, behind.

Bel. Ha! a man under the window!

Fran. No, here she comes, and I may convey her to him.

Enter JACINTHA, and runs to FRANKLY.

Jac. I have at last got to you. Let's haste away—
Oh!

Fran. Be not frightened, lady.

Jac. Oh! am I abus'd! betray'd!

Bel. Betray'd!—Frankly!

Fran. Bellamy!

Bel. I can scarce believe it though I see it. Draw—

Fran. Hear me, Bellamy—Lady—

Jac. Stay—do not fight!

Fran. I am innocent; it is all a mistake?

Jac. For my sake, be quiet! We shall be discovered!
the family is alarm'd!

Bel. You are obeyed. Mr. Frankly, there is but
one way—

Fran. I understand you. Any time but now. You
will certainly be discovered! To-morrow at your
chambers.

Bel. Till then farewell. [*Exeunt Bel. and Jac.*

Fran. Then, when he is cool, I may be heard;
and the real, though suspicious, account of this matter
may be believed. Yet, amidst all this perplexity, it
pleases me to find my fair incognita is jealous of my
love.

Strict. [*Within.*] Where's Lucetta? Search every
place.

Fran. Hark! the cry is up! I must be gone.

[*Exit Fran.*

Enter Mr. STRICTLAND, TESTER, and Servants.

Strict. She's gone! she's lost! I am cheated! pur-
sue her! seek her!

Test. Sir, all her clothes are in her chamber.

Ser. Sir, Mrs. Clarinda said she was in boy's
clothes.

Strict. Ay, ay, I know it—Bellamy has her—Come
along—Pursue her. [*Exeunt.*

Enter RANGER.

Ran. Hark!—Was not the noise this way—
No, there is no game stirring. This same goddess

Diana, shines so bright with her chastity, that 'egad, I believe the wenches are ashamed to look her in the face. Now am I in an admirable mood for a frolic: have wine in my head, and money in my pocket, and so am furnished out for the cannonading of any countess in Christendom. Ha! what have we here? a ladder!—this cannot be placed here for nothing—and a window open! Is it love or mischief now that is going on within? I care not which—I am in a right cue for either. Up I go, *neck or nothing*. Stay—do I not run a greater chance of spoiling sport than I do of making any? that I hate as much as I love the other. There can be no harm in seeing how the land lies—I'll up. [*Goes up softly.*] All is hush——Ha! a light, and a woman! by all that's lucky, neither old nor crooked! I'll in ——Ha! she is gone again! I will after her. [*Gets in at the window.*] And for fear of the squalls of virtue, and the pursuit of the family, I will make sure of the ladder. Now, Fortune be my guide!

SCENE II.

Mrs. STRICTLAND's Dressing-Room. Enter Mrs. STRICTLAND followed by LUCETTA.

Mrs. Str. Well, I am in great hopes she will escape.

Luc. Never fear, madam, the lovers have the start of him, and I warrant they keep it.

Mrs. Str. Were Mr. Strictland ever to suspect my being privy to her flight, I know not what might be the consequence.

Luc. Then you had better be undressing. He may return immediately.

[*As she is sitting down at the toilet Ranger enters behind.*]

Ran. Young and beautiful. [*Aside.*]

Luc. I have watch'd him pretty narrowly of late, and never once suspected till this morning—

Mrs. Str. And who gave you authority to watch his actions, or pry into his secrets?

Luc. I hope, madam, you are not angry, I thought

it might have been of service to you to know my master was jealous.

Ran. And her husband jealous! If she does but send away the maid, I am happy.

Mrs. Str. [*Angrily.*] Leave me.

Luc. This it is to meddle with other people's affairs.
[*Exit in anger.*]

Ran. What a lucky dog I am? I never made a gentleman a cuckold before. Now, impudence assist me.

Mrs. Str. [*Rising.*] Provoking! I am sure I never have deserved it of him.

Ran. Oh, cuckold him by all means, madam; I am your man! [*She shrieks.*] Oh, fie, madam! if you squall so cursedly you will be discover'd.

Mrs. Str. Discover'd! What mean you sir? do you come to abuse me?

Ran. I'll do my endeavour, madam; you can have no more.

Mrs. Str. Whence came you? How got you here?

Ran. Dear madam, so long as I'm here, what signifies how I got here, or whence I came? but that I may satisfy your curiosity, first, as to your whence came you? I answer, out of the street: and to your how got you here? I say, in at the window; it stood so invitingly open, it was irresistible. But, madam—you were going to undress. I beg I may not incommode you.

Mrs. Str. This is the most consummate piece of impudence!—

Ran. For Heaven's sake have one drop of pity for a poor young fellow who long has loved you.

Mrs. Str. What would the fellow have!

Ran. Your husband's usage will excuse you to the world.

Mrs. Str. I cannot bear this insolence! Help! help!

Ran. Oh, hold that clamorous tongue, madam! Speak one word more, and I am gone, positively gone.

Mrs. Str. Gone! so I would have you.

Ran. Lord, madam, you are so hasty!

Mrs. Str. Shall I not speak, when a thief, robber, breaks into my house at midnight? Help! help!

Ran. Ha! no one hears. Now, Cupid assist me—Look ye, madam, I never could make fine speeches, and cringe and bow, and fawn and flatter, and lie; I have said more to you already, than ever I said to a woman in such circumstances in all my life. But since I find you will yield to no persuasion to your good, I will gently force you to be grateful. [*Throws down his hat, and seizes her.*] Come, come, unbend that brow, and look more kindly on me!

Mrs. Str. For shame, sir! thus on my knees let me beg for mercy.

[*Kneeling.*

Ran. And thus on mine let me beg the same.

[*He kneels, catches, and kisses her.*

Strict. [*Within.*] Take away her sword! she'll hurt herself!

Mrs. Str. Oh, Heavens! that's my husband's voice!

Ran. [*Rising*] The devil it is!

Strict. [*Within*] Take away her sword, I say, and then I can close with her.

Mrs. Str. He is upon the stairs, now coming up! I am undone if he sees you.

Ran. Pox on him, I must decamp then. Which way?

Mrs. Str. Through this passage into the next chamber.

Ran. And so into the street. With all my heart. You may be perfectly easy, madam: mum's the word; I never blab. [*Aside.*] I shall not leave off so, but wait till the last moment.

[*Exit Ranger.*

Mrs. Str. So, he's gone. What could I have said, if he had been discovered!

Enter Mr. STRICTLAND driving in JACINTHA, LUCETTA following.

Strict. Once more, my pretty masculine madam, you are welcome home; and I hope to keep you somewhat closer than I have done; for to-morrow

morning eight o'clock is the latest hour you shall stay in this lewd town.

Jac. Oh, sir; when once a girl is equipp'd with a hearty resolution, it is not your worship's sagacity, nor the great chain at your gate, can hinder her from doing what she has a-mind.

Strict. Oh, Lord! Lord! how this love improves a young lady's modesty!

Jac. Am I to blame to seek for happiness any where, when you are resolved to make me miserable here?

Strict. I have this night prevented your making yourself so; and will endeavour to do it for the future. I have you safe now, and the devil shall not get you out of my clutches again. I have lock'd the doors and barred them, I warrant you. So here, [*Giving her a candle.*] troop to your chamber, and to bed, whilst you are well. Go! [*He treads on Ranger's hat.*] What's here? a hat! a man's hat in my wife's dressing room! [*Looking at the hat.*

Mrs. Str. What shall I do? [*Aside.*

Strict. [*Taking up the hat and looking at Mrs. Strictland.*] Ha! by hell, I see 'tis true!

Mrs. Str. My fears confound me. I dare not tell the truth, and know not how to frame a lie! [*Aside.*

Strict. Mrs. Strictland, Mrs. Strictland, how came this hat into your chamber?

Luc. Are you that way disposed, my fine lady, and will not trust me? [*Aside.*

Strict. Speak, wretch, speak——

Jac. I could not have suspected this. [*Aside.*

Strict. Why dost thou not speak?

Mrs. Str. Sir——

Strict. Guilt—'tis guilt that ties your tongue!

Luc. I must bring her off, however. "No chambermaid can help it." [*Aside.*

Strict. My fears, are just, and I am miserable——
Thou worst of women!

Mrs. Str. I know my innocence, and can bear this no longer.

Strict. I know you are false, and 'tis I who will bear my injuries no longer.

[Both walk about in a passion.]

Luc. *[To Jacintha aside.]* Is not the hat yours? own it, madam.

[Takes away JACINTHA's hat, and exit.]

Mrs. Str. What ground, what cause have you for jealousy, when you yourself can witness, your leaving me was accidental, your return uncertain; and expected even sooner than it happen'd! The abuse is gross and palpable.

Strict. Why this is true!

Mrs. Str. Indeed, Jacintha, I am innocent.

Strict. And yet this hat must belong to somebody.

Jac. Dear Mrs. Strictland, be not concerned. When he has diverted himself a little longer with it——

Strict. Ha!

Jac. I suppose he will give me my hat again.

Strict. Your hat!

Jac. Yes, my hat. You brush'd it from my side yourself, and then trod upon it; whether on purpose to abuse this lady or no, you best know yourself.

Strict. It cannot be—'tis all a lie.

Jac. Believe so still, with all my heart; but the hat is mine. Now, sir, who does it belong to?

[Snatches it, and puts it on.]

Strict. Why did she look so?

Jac. Your violence of temper is too much for her. You use her ill, and then suspect her for that confusion which you yourself occasion.

Strict. Why did not you set me right at first?

Jac. Your hard usage of me, sir, is a sufficient reason why I should not be much concerned to undeceive you at all. 'Tis for your lady's sake I do it now; who deserves much better of you than to be thus exposed for every slight suspicion. See where she sits—Go to her.

Mrs. Str. *[Rising.]* Indeed, Mr. Strictland, I have a soul as much above——

Strict. Whew! Now you have both found your tongues, and I must bear with their eternal rattle.

Jac. For shame, sir, go to her, and——

Strict. Well, well, what shall I say? I forgive—— all is over. I, I, I forgive.

Mrs. Str. Forgive! What do you mean?

Jac. Forgive her! is that all? Consider, sir——

Strict. Hold, hold your confounded tongues, and I'll do any thing. I'll ask pardon—or forgive—or any thing. Good now, be quiet—I ask your pardon—there—[*Kisses her.*] For you madam, I am infinitely obliged to you, and I could find in my heart to make you a return in kind, by marrying you to a beggar, but I have more conscience. Come, come, to your chamber. Here, take this candle.

Enter LUCETTA pertly.

Luc. Sir, if you please, I will light my young lady to bed.

Strict. No, no! no such thing, good madam. She shall have nothing but her pillow to consult this night, I assure you. So, in, in. [*The ladies take leave. Exit Jac.*] Good night, kind madam.

Luc. Pox of the jealous fool! we might both have escap'd out of the window purely. [*Aside.*]

Strict. Go, get you down; and do you hear, order the coach to be ready in the morning at eight, exactly. [*Exit Lucetta.*] So, she is safe till to-morrow, and then for the country; and when she is there I can manage as I think fit.

Mrs. Str. Dear Mr. Strickland——

Strict. I am not in a humour, Mrs. Strickland, fit to talk with you, Go to bed. I will endeavour to get the better of my temper, if I can; I'll follow you. [*Exit Mrs. Str.*] How despicable have I made myself. [*Exit.*]

SCENE III.

Another Chamber. Enter RANGER.

Ran. All seems hush'd again, and I may venture out. I may as well sneak off whilst I am in a whole skin. And shall so much love and claret as I am

in possession of only lull me to sleep, when it might so much better keep me waking? Forbid it fortune, and forbid it love. This is a chamber, perhaps, of some bewitching female, and I may yet be happy. Ha! a light! the door opens. A boy! pox on him.

[*He retires.*]

Enter JACINTHA with a candle.

Jac. I have been listening at the door, and, from their silence, I conclude they are peaceably gone to bed together.

Ran. A pretty boy, faith; he seems uneasy. [*Aside.*]

Jac. [*Sitting down.*] What an unlucky night has this proved to me! Every circumstance has fallen out unhappily.

Ran. He talks aloud. I'll listen. [*Aside.*]

Jac. But what most amazes me is, that Clarinda should betray me!

Ran. Clarinda! she must be a woman. Well, what of her?

Jac. My guardian else would never have suspected my disguise.

Ran. Disguise! Ha, it must be so! What eyes she has! what a dull rogue was I, not to suspect this sooner! [*Aside.*]

Jac. Ha, I had forgot; the ladder is at the window still, and I will boldly venture by myself. [*Rising briskly, sees Ranger.*] Ha! a man, and well drest! Ha, Mrs. Strictland! are you then at last dishonest!

Ran. By all my wishes she is a charming woman! lucky rascal! [*Aside.*]

Jac. But I will, if possible, conceal her shame, and stand the brunt of his impertinence.

Ran. What shall I say to her? No matter; any thing soft will do the business. [*Aside.*]

Jac. Who are you?

Ran. A man, young gentleman.

Jac. And what would you have?

Ran. A woman.

Jac. You are very free, sir. Here are none for you.

Ran. Ay, but there is one, and a fair one too; the most charming creature nature ever set her hand to; and you are the dear little pilot that must direct me to her heart.

Jac. What mean you, sir? It is an office I am not accustomed to.

Ran. You won't have far to go however. I never make my errands tedious. It is to your own heart, dear madam, I would have you whisper in my behalf. Nay, never start. Think you such beauty could ever be concealed from eyes so well acquainted with its charms?

Jac. What will become of me! If I cry out, Mrs. Strickland is undone. This is my last resort. [*Aside.*

Ran. Pardon, dear lady, the boldness of this visit which your guardian's care has forced me to: but I long have loved you, long have doated on that beautiful face, and followed you from place to place, though perhaps unknown and unregarded.

Jac. Here's a special fellow! [*Aside.*

Ran. Turn then an eye of pity on my sufferings; and, by Heaven, one tender look from those piercing eyes, one touch of this soft hand——

[*Going to take her hand.*

Jac. Hold, sir, no nearer.

Ran. Would more than repay whole years of pain.

Jac. Hear me; but keep your distance, or I raise the family.

Ran. Blessings on her tongue, only for prattling to me! [*Aside.*

Jac. Oh, for a moment's courage, and I shall shame him from his purpose. [*Aside.*] If I were certain so much gallantry had been shewn on my account only——

Ran. You wrong your beauty to think that any other could have power to draw me hither. By all the little loves that play about your lips, I swear——

Jac. You came to me, and me alone.

Ran. By all the thousand graces that inhabit there, you, and only you, have drawn me hither.

Jac. Well said——*Could I but believe you—*

Ran. By Heaven she comes! Ah, honest Ranger,
I never knew thee fail. [*Aside.*]

Jac. Pray, sir, where did you leave this hat?

Ran. That hat! that hat—'tis my hat—I dropt it
in the next chamber as I was looking for yours.

Jac. How mean and despicable do you look now!

Ran. So, so! I am in a pretty pickle! [*Aside.*]

Jac. You know by this that I am acquainted with
every thing that has passed within; and how ill it
agrees with what you have professed to me. Let me
advise you, sir, to begone immediately: through that
window you may easily get into the street. One
scream of mine, the least noise at the door, will wake
the house.

Ran. Say you so? [*Aside.*]

Jac. Believe me, sir, an injured husband is not
so easily appeased, and a suspected wife that is jealous
of her honour——

Ran. Is the devil, and so let's have no more of her.
Look ye, madam, [*Getting between the door and her.*]
I have but one argument left, and that is a strong one.
Look on me well; I am as handsome, a strong, well
made fellow as any about town; and since we are
alone, as I take it, we can have no occasion to be more
private. [*Going to lay hold of her.*]

Jac. I have a reputation, sir, and will maintain
it.

Ran. You have a bewitching pair of eyes.

Jac. Consider my virtue. [*Struggling.*]

Ran. Consider your beauty and my desires.

Jac. If I were a man, you dar'd not use me thus.

Ran. I should not have the same temptation.

Jac. Hear me, sir—I will be heard. [*Breaks from
him.*] There is a man who will make you repent this
usage of me. Oh, Bellamy! where art thou now?

Ran. Bellamy!

Jac. Were he here, you durst not thus affront me.

[*Bursting into tears.*]

Ran. His mistress, on my soul! [*Aside.*] You can

love, madam ; you can love, I find. Her tears affect me strangely.

[*Aside.*

Jac. I am not ashamed to own my passion for a man of virtue and honour. I love and glory in it.

Ran. Oh, brave ! and you can write letters, you can. ' I will not trust myself home with you this evening, because I know it is inconvenient.'

Jac. Ha !

Ran. ' Therefore I beg you would procure me a lodging ; 'tis no matter how far off my guardian's. Yours, Jacintha.'

Jac. The very words of my letter ! I am amaz'd ! Do you know Mr. Bellamy ?

Ran. There is not a man on earth I have so great a value for : and he must have some value for me too, or he would never have shewn me your pretty epistle ; think of that, fair lady. The ladder is at the window ; and so, madam, I hope delivering you safe into his arms, will, in some measure, expiate the crime I have been guilty of to you.

Jac. Good Heaven ! how fortunate is this !

Ran. I believe I make myself appear more wicked than I really am. For, damn me, if I do not feel more satisfaction in the thoughts of restoring you to my friend, than I could have pleasure in any favour your bounty could have bestowed. *Let any other rake lay his hand upon his heart and say the same.*

Jac. Your generosity transports me.

Ran. Let us lose no time then ; the ladder's ready. Where was you to lodge ?

Jac. At Mr. Meggot's.

Ran. At my friend Jacky's ! better and better still.

Jac. Are you acquainted with him too ?

Ran. Ay, ay ; why, did I not tell you at first that I was one of your old acquaintance ? I know all about you, you see ; though the devil fetch me, if ever I saw you before. Now, madam, give me your hand.

Jac. And now, sir, have with you.

Ran. Then thou art a girl of spirit. And though I long to hug you for trusting yourself with me, I

will not beg a single kiss, till Bellamy himself shall give me leave. He must fight well that takes you from me.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV. SCENE I.

The Piazza. Enter BELLAMY and FRANKLY.

Bellamy. PSHA! what impertinent devil put it into your head to meddle with my affairs?

Fran. You know I went thither in pursuit of another.

Bel. I know nothing you had to do there at all.

Fran. I thought, Mr. Bellamy, you were a lover.

Bel. I am so; and therefore should be forgiven this sudden warmth.

Fran. And therefore should forgive the fond impertinence of a lover.

Bel. Jealousy, you know, is as natural an incident to love—

Fran. As curiosity. By one piece of silly curiosity I have gone nigh to ruin both myself and you; let not then your jealousy complete our misfortunes. I fear I have lost a mistress as well as you. Then let us not quarrel. All may come right again.

Bel. It is impossible. She is gone, removed for ever from my sight: she is in the country by this time.

Fran. How did you lose her after we parted?

Bel. By too great confidence. When I got her to my chair, the chairmen were not to be found. And, safe as I thought in our disguise, I actually put her into the chair, when Mr. Strickland and his servants were in sight; which I had no sooner done, than they surrounded us, overpowered me, and carried her away.

Fran. Unfortunate indeed! Could you not make a second attempt?

Bel. I had designed it; but when I came to the door, I found the ladder removed; and hearing no noise, seeing no lights, nor being able to make any

body answer, I concluded all attempts as impracticable as I now find them.—Ha! I see Lucetta coming. Then they may be still in town.

Enter LUCETTA.

Lucetta, welcome! what news of Jacintha?

Luc. News, sir! you fright me out of my senses! Why, is she not with you?

Bel. What do you mean? With me! I have not seen her since I lost her last night.

Luc. Good Heav'n! then she is undone for ever.

Fran. Why, what's the matter?

Bel. Speak out—I'm all amazement.

Luc. She is escap'd, without any of us knowing how. Nobody miss'd her till morning. We all thought she went away with you. But Heaven knows now what may have happened.

Bel. Somebody must have accompanied her in her flight.

Luc. We know of nobody: we are all in confusion at home. My master swears revenge on you. My mistress says a stranger has her.

Bel. A stranger!

Luc. But Mrs. Clarinda——

Bel. Clarinda! who is she!

Luc. [*To Frankly.*] The lady, sir, who you saw at our house last night.

Fran. Ha! what of her?

Luc. She says, she is sure one Frankly is the man; she saw them together, and knows it to be true.

Fran. Damn'd fortune! [*Aside.*]

Luc. Sure this is not Mr. Frankly.

Fran. Nothing will convince him now. [*Aside.*]

Bel. [*Looking at Frankly.*] Ha! 'tis true!—I see 'tis true. [*Aside.*] Lucetta, run up to Buckle, and take him with you to search wherever you can. [*Puts her out.*] Now, Mr. Frankly, I have found you.—You have used me so ill, that you force me to forget you are my friend.

Fran. What do you mean?

Bel. Draw.

Fran. Are you mad? By Heavens, I am innocent.

Bel. I have heard you, and will no longer be imposed on—Defend yourself.

Fran. Nay, if you are so hot, I draw to defend myself as I would against a madman.

Enter RANGER.

Ran. What the devil, swords at noon-day! Have among you, faith! [*Parts them.*] What's here, Bellamy—Yes, egad, you are Bellamy, and you are Frankly, put up, both of you—or else—I am a devilish fellow when once my sword is out.

Bel. We shall have a time—

Ran. [*Pushing Bellamy one way.*] A time for what?

Fran. I shall be always as ready to defend my innocence as now.

Ran. [*Pushing Frankly the other way.*] Innocence! ay, to be sure—at your age—a mighty innocent fellow, no doubt. But what, in the name of common sense, is it that ails you both? are you mad? The last time I saw you, you were hugging and kissing; and now you are cutting one another's throats—I never knew any good come of one fellow's beslaving another—But I shall put you into better humour, I warrant you—Bellamy, Frankly, listen both of you—Such fortune—such a scheme—

Bel. Pr'ythee, leave fooling. What art drunk?

Fran. He is always so, I think.

Ran. And who gave you the privilege of thinking? Drunk! no, I am not drunk.—Topsy perhaps, with my good fortune—merry, and in spirits—though I have not fire enough to run my friend through the body. Not drunk, though Jack Meggot and I have boxed it about—Champaign was the word for two whole hours by Shrewsbury clock.

Bel. Jack Meggot! Why, I left him at one, going to bed.

Ran. That may be, but I made shift to rouse him and his family by four this morning. Ounds, I pick'd up a wench, and carried her to his house.

Bel. Ha!

Ran. Such a variety of adventures—Nay, you shall hear—But, before I begin, Bellamy, you shall promise me a half a dozen kisses before hand: for the devil fetch me if that little jade, Jacintha, would give me one, though I pressed hard.

Bel. Who, Jacintha? press to kiss Jacintha?

Ran. Kiss her! ay, why not? is she not a woman, and made to be kiss'd?

Bel. Kiss her—I shall run distracted!

Ran. How could I help it, when I had her alone, you rogue, in her bed-chamber at midnight! if I had been to be sacrificed, I should have done it.

Bel. Bed-chamber, at midnight! I can hold no longer—Draw.

Fran. Be easy, Bellamy. [Interposing.]

Bel. He has been at some of his damn'd tricks with her.

Fran. Hear him out.

Ran. 'Sdeath, how could I know she was his mistress? But I tell this story most miserably. I should have told you first, I was in another lady's chamber. By the lord, I got in at the window by a ladder of ropes.

Fran. Ha! Another lady?

Ran. Another: and stole in upon her whilst she was undressing; beautiful as an angel blooming and young—

Fran. What, in the same house?

Bel. What is this to Jacintha? Ease me of my pain.

Ran. Ay, ay, in the same house, on the same floor. The sweetest, little angel—But I design to have another touch with her.

Fran. 'Sdeath! but you shall have a touch upon me first.

Bel. Stay, Frankly. [Interposing.]

Ran. Why, what strange madness has possess'd you both, that nobody must kiss a pretty wench but yourselves.

Bel. What became of Jacintha?

Ran. Ounds! what have you done, that you must monopolize kissing?

Fran. Pr'ythee, honest Ranger, ease me of the pain I am in. Was her name Clarinda?

Bel. Speak in plain words, where Jacintha is, where to be found. Dear boy, tell me.

Ran. Ay, now it is honest Ranger; and, dear boy, tell me—and a minute ago, my throat was to be cut—I could find in my heart not to open my lips. But here comes Jack Meggot, who will let you into all the secret, though he designed to keep it from you, in half the time that I can, though I had ever so great a mind to tell it you.

Enter JACK MEGGOT.

J. Meg. So, save ye, save ye, lads! we have been frighten'd out of our wits for you. Not hearing of Mr. Bellamy, poor Jacintha is ready to sink for fear of any accident.

Bel. Is she at your house?

J. Meg. Why, did not you know that? We dispatch'd Master Ranger to you three hours ago.

Ran. Ay, plague! but I had business of my own, so I could not come—Hark ye, Frankly, is your girl, maid, wife, widow?

Fran. A maid, I hope.

Ran. The odds are against you, Charles—But mine is married, you rogue, and her husband jealous—The devil is in it if I do not reap some reward for my last night's service.

Bel. He has certainly been at Mrs. Strictland herself. But Frankly, I dare not look on you.

Fran. This one embrace cancels all thoughts of enmity.

Bel. Thou generous man!—But I must haste to ease Jacintha of her fears. *[Exit.]*

Fran. And I to make up matters with Clarinda. *[Exit.]*

Ran. And I to some kind wench or other, Jack. But where I shall find her, Heaven knows. And so, my service to your monkey.

J. Meg. Adieu, rattlepate. [Exeunt.

SCENE II.

The Hall of Mr. STRICTLAND's House. Enter Mrs. STRICTLAND and CLARINDA.

Mrs. Str. But, why in such a hurry, my dear; stay till your servants can go along with you.

Cla. Oh, no matter: they'll follow with my things. It is but a little way off, and my chair will guard me. After my staying out so late last night, I am sure Mr. Stricland will think every minute an age whilst I am in his house.

Mrs. Str. I am as much amaz'd at his suspecting your innocence as my own; and every time I think of it I blush at my present behaviour to you.

Cla. No ceremony, dear child.

Mrs. Str. No, Clarinda, I am too well acquainted with your good humour. But I fear, in the eye of a malicious world, it may look like a confirmation of his suspicion.

Cla. My dear, if the world will speak ill of me for the little innocent gaiety, which I think the peculiar happiness of my temper, I know no way to prevent it. and am only sorry the world is so ill-natured: but I shall not part with my mirth, I assure them, so long as I know it innocent. I wish, my dear, this may be the greatest uneasiness your husband's jealousy ever gives you.

Mrs. Str. I hope he never again may have such occasion as he had last night.

Cla. You are so unfashionable a wife.—Why, last night's accident would have made half the wives in London easy for life. Has not his jealousy discover'd itself openly? And are not you innocent? There is nothing but your foolish temper that prevents his being absolutely in your power.

Mrs. Str. Clarinda, this is too serious an affair to laugh at. Let me advise you, take care of Mr. Frankly, observe his temper well, and if he has the least taint of jealousy, cast him off, and never trust to keeping him in your power.

Cla. You will hear little more of Frankly, I believe. Here is Mr. Strictland.

Enter Mr. STRICTLAND and LUCETTA.

Strict. Lucetta says you want me, madam.

Cla. I trouble you, sir, only that I might return you thanks for the civillities I have received in your family, before I took my leave.

Strict. Keep them to yourself, dear madam, As it is my request that you leave my house, your thanks upon that occasion are not very desirable.

Cla. Oh, sir, you need not fear. My thanks were only for your civilities. They will not overburden you. But I'll conform to your humour, sir, and part with as little ceremony—

Strict. As we met.

Cla. The brute! [*Aside.*] My dear, good bye, we may meet again. [*To Mrs. Strictland.*

Strict. If you dare trust me with your hand.

Cla. Lucetta, remember my instructions. Now, sir, have with you. [*Mr. Strictland leads Clarinda out.*

Mrs. Str. Are her instructions cruel or kind, Lucetta? For I suppose they relate to Mr. Frankly.

Luc. Have you a mind to try if I can keep a secret as well as yourself, madam? But I will shew you I am fit to be trusted by keeping this, though it signifies nothing.

Mrs. Str. This answer is not so civil, I think.

Luc. I beg pardon, madam, I meant it not to offend.

Mrs. Str. Pray let us have no more such. I neither desire, nor want your assistance.

Re-enter Mr. STRICTLAND.

Strict. She is gone; I feel myself somewhat easier already. Since I have begun the day with gallantry, madam, shall I conduct you up?

Mrs. Str. There is something, sir, which gives you secret uneasiness. I wish—

Strict. Perhaps so, madam; and perhaps it may soon be no secret at all. [*Leads her out.*

Luc. Would I were once well settled with my

young lady ; for, at present, this is but an odd sort of a queer family. Last night's affair puzzles me. A hat there was that belong'd to none of us, that's certain : madam was in a fright, that is as certain ; and I brought all off. Jacintha escap'd, no one of us knows how. The good man's jealousy was yesterday groundless ; yet to-day, in my mind, he is very much in the right. Mighty odd, all this !—Somebody knocks. If this should be Clarinda's spark, I have an odd message for him too. [*She opens the door.*

Enter FRANKLY.

Fran. So, my pretty handmaid, meeting with you gives me some hopes. May I speak with Clarinda ?

Luc. Whom do you want, sir ?

Fran. Clarinda, child. The young lady I was admitted to yesterday.

Luc. Clarinda !—No such person lives here, I assure you.

Fran. Where then ?

Luc. I don't know indeed, sir.

Fran. Will you inquire within ?

Luc. Nobody knows in this house, sir, you will find.

Fran. What do you mean ? She is a friend of Jacintha's, your lady. I will take my oath she was here last night ; and you yourself spok'e of her being here this morning—Not know !

Luc. No ; none of us know. She went away of a sudden—no one of us can imagine whither.

Fran. Why, faith, child, thou hast a tolerable face, and hast deliver'd this denial very handsomely : but let me tell you, your impertinence this morning had lik'd to have cost me my life ; now, therefore, make me amends. I come from your young mistress ; I come from Mr. Bellamy ; I come with my purse full of gold, that persuasive rhetoric, to win you to let me see and speak to this Clarinda once again.

Luc. She is not here, sir.

Fran. Direct me to her ?

Luc. No, I can't do that neither.

Enter Mr. STRICTLAND behind.

Strict. I heard a knocking at the door, and a man's voice—Ha! [*Aside.*]

Fran. Deliver this letter to her.

Strict. By all my fears, a letter! [*Aside.*]

Luc. I don't know but I may be tempted to do that.

Fran. Take it then—and with it this.

[*Kisses her, and gives her money.*]

Strict. Um! there are two bribes in a breath! What a jade she is! [*Aside.*]

Luc. Ay; this gentleman understands reason.

Fran. And be assured you oblige your mistress while you are serving me.

Strict. Her mistress!—Damn'd sex! and damn'd wife, thou art an epitome of that sex! [*Aside.*]

Fran. And if you can procure me an answer, your fee shall be enlarged. [*Exit.*]

Luc. The next step is to get her to read this letter.

Strict. [*Snatches the letter.*] No noise—but stand silent there, whilst I read this. [*Breaks it open, and drops the case.*] ‘Madam, the gaiety of a heart happy ‘as mine was yesterday, may, I hope, easily excuse ‘the unseasonable visit I made your house last night.’—Death and the devil! confusion! I shall run idstracted. It is too much!—There was a man then to whom the hat belonged; and I was gull’d, abused, cheated, imposed on by a chit, a child—Oh, woman, woman!—But I’ll be calm, search it to the bottom, and have a full revenge—

Luc. [*Aside.*] So, here’s fine work! He’ll make himself very ridiculous though.

Strict. [*Reads on.*] ‘I know my innocence will appear so manifestly, that I need only appeal to the ‘lady who accompanied you at Bath.’—Your very humble servant, good, innocent, fine madam Clarinda. —‘And I do not doubt but her good-nature,’—bawd! bawd!—‘will not let you persist in injuring your obedient humble servant,’

CHARLES FRANKLY.’

Now, who can say my jealousy lack’d foundation, or my suspicion of fine madam’s innocent gaiety was

unjust?—Gaiety! why ay, 'twas gaiety brought him hither. Gaiety makes her a bawd—My wife may be a whore in gaiety. What a number of things become fashionable under the notion of gaiety—What, you receiv'd this epistle in gaiety too; and were to deliver it to my wife, I suppose, when the gay fit came next upon her?—Why, you impudent young strumpet, do you laugh at me?

Luc. I wou'd, if I dar'd, laugh heartily——Be pleas'd, sir, only to look at that piece of paper that lies there.

Strict. Ha!

Luc. I have not touched it, sir. It is the case that letter came in, and the direction will inform you whom I was to deliver it to.

Strict. This is directed to Clarinda!

Luc. Oh, is it so? Now read it over again, and all your foolish doubts will vanish.

Strict. I have no doubts at all. I am satisfied that you, Jacintha, Clarinda, my wife, all are——

Luc. Lud! Lud! you will make a body mad.

Strict. Hold your impertinent tongue.

Luc. You'll find the thing to be just as I say, sir.

Strict. Begone. [*Exit Lucetta.*] They must be poor at the work, indeed, if they did not lend one another their names. 'Tis plain, 'tis evident, and I am miserable. But for my wife, she shall not stay one night longer in my house. Separation, shame, contempt, shall be her portion. I am determined in the thing; and when once it is over, I may, perhaps, be easy.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE III.

The Street. CLARINDA brought in a Chair, RANGER following.

Ran. Hark ye, chairmen! damn your confounded trot. Go slower.

Cla. Here, stop.

Ran. By Heavens! the monsters hear reason and obey.

Cla. [*Letting down the window.*] What troublesome fellow was that?

1st Chair. Some rake, I warrant, that cannot carry himself home, and wants us to do it for him.

Cla. There—And pray do you take care I be not troubled with him. [*Goes in.*]

Ran. That's as much as to say now, pray follow me. Madam, you are a charming woman, and I will do it—

1st Chair. Stand off, sir.

Ran. Pr'ythee, honest fellow—what—what writing is that? [*Endeavouring to get in.*]

2d Chair. You come not here.

Ran. Lodgings to be let: a pretty convenient inscription, and the sign of a good modest family. There may be lodgings for gentlemen as well as ladies. Hark ye, rogues; I'll lay you all the silver I have in my pocket, there it is, I get in there in spite of your teeth, ye pimps.

[*Throws down the money, and goes in.*]

[*Within.*] Chair, chair, chair!

Chair. Who calls chair?

"*1st Chair.* What have you let the gentleman in?

"*2d Chair.* I'll tell you what, partner, he certainly slipt by whilst we were picking up the money.
"Come, take up." [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

CLARINDA's Lodgings. Enter *CLARINDA* and *Maid* following.

Maid. Bless me, madam, you seem disorder'd; what's the matter?

Cla. Some impertinent fellow follow'd the chair, and I am afraid they let him in. [*A noise between Ranger and Landlady.*] I should certainly know that voice. [*Ranger talks with the Landlady.*] My madcap cousin Ranger, as I live. I am sure he does not know me.—If I could but hide my face now, what sport I shou'd have! A mask, a mask! Run and see if you can find a mask.

Maid. I believe there is one above.

Cl. Run, run, and fetch it. [*Exit Maid.*] Here he comes.

Enter RANGER and Landlady.

How unlucky this is ! [*Turning from them.*

Land. What's your business here, unmannerly sir?

Ran. Well, let's see these lodgings that are to be let. Gad, a very pretty neat tenement—But hark ye, is it real and natural, all that, or only patched up and new painted this summer-season, against the town fills?

Land. What does the saucy fellow mean with his double tenders here? Get you down.

Enter Maid with a mask.

Maid. Here is a very dirty one. [*Aside to Clarinda.*

Cl. No matter—now we shall see a little what he would be at. [*Aside.*

Land. This is an honest house. For all your lac'd waistcoat, I'll have you thrown down neck and heels.

Ran. Pho! not in such a hurry, good old lady—A mask! nay, with all my heart. It saves a world of blushing. Have you ne'er a one for me!—I am apt to be asham'd myself on these occasions.

Land. Get you down, I say.—

Ran. Not if I guess right, old lady. Madam, [*To Clarinda, who makes signs to the Landlady to retire.*] look ye there now! that a woman should live to your age, and know so little of the matter. Begone. [*Exit Landlady.*] By her forwardness this should be a whore of quality. My boy Ranger, thou art in luck to-day. She won't speak, I find—then I will. [*Aside.*] Delicate lodgings truly, madam; and very neatly furnish'd—A very convenient room this, I must needs own, to entertain a mix'd company. But, my dear charming creature, does not that door open to a more commodious apartment for the happiness of a private friend, or so? The prettiest brass lock—Fast, um; that won't do. 'Sdeath you are a beautiful woman; I am sure you are. Pr'ythee let me see your face. It is your interest, child—The longer you delay, the more I shall expect. Therefore, [*Taking her hand.*] my dear, soft, kind, new acquaintance, thus let me

take your hand, and, whilst you gently with the other let day-light in upon me, let me softly hold you to me, that with my longing lips I may receive the warmest, best impression. [*She unmasks.*] Clarinda!

Cla. Ha, ha! your servant, cousin Ranger—Ha, ha, ha!

Ran. Oh, your humble servant, madam. You had like to have been beholden to your mask, cousin—I must brazen it out. [*Aside.*

Cla. Ha, ha, ha! You were not so happy in your disguise, sir. The pretty stagger in your gait, that happy disposition of your wig, the genteel negligence of your whole person, and those pretty flowers of modish gallantry, made it impossible to mistake you, my sweet coz. Ha, ha!

Ran. Oh, I knew you too; but I fancied you had taken a particular liking to my person, and had a mind to sink the relation under that little piece of black velvet; and, 'egad, you never find me behind-hand in a frolic. But since it is otherwise, my merry, good-humoured cousin, I am as heartily glad to see you in town, as I should be to meet any of my old bottle acquaintance.

Cla. And, on my side, I am as happy in meeting your worship, as I should be in a rencounter with e'er a petticoat in Christendom.

Ran. And if you have any occasion for a dangling gallant to Vauxhall, Ranelagh, or even to the poor neglected Park, you are so unlike the rest of your virtuous sisters of the petticoat, that I will venture myself with you.

Cla. Take care what you promise; for who knows but this face you were pleased to say so many pretty things of before you saw it, may raise so many rivals among your kept mistresses, and reps of quality—

Ran. Hold, hold! a truce with your satire, sweet coz; or if scandal must be the topic of every virtuous woman's conversation, call for your tea-water, and let it be in its proper element. Come, your tea, your tea.

Enter Maid.

Cla. With all my heart—Who's there? Get tea—upon condition that you stay till it comes.

Ran. That is according as you behave, madam.

Cla. Oh, sir, I am very sensible of the favour.

Ran. Nay, you may, I assure you; for there is but one woman of virtue, besides yourself, I would stay with ten minutes, (and I have not known her above these twelve hours;) the insipidity, or the rancour of their discourse is insufferable—'Sdeath! I had rather take the air with my grandmother.

Cla. Ha, ha, ha! the ladies are highly obliged to you, I vow.

Ran. I tell you what; the lady I speak of was obliged to me, and the generous girl is ready to own it.

Cla. And, pray, when was it you did virtue this considerable service?

Ran. But this last night, the devil fetch me! A romantic whim of mine conveyed me into her chamber, where I found her, young and beautiful, alone at midnight, dressed like a soft Adonis; her lovely hair all loose about her shoulders—

Cla. In boy's clothes! this is worth attending to.

[Aside.]

Ran. Gad, I no more suspected her being a woman, than I did your being my eater-cousin.

Cla. How did you discover it at last?

Ran. Why, faith, she very modestly dropt me a hint of it herself.

Cla. Herself! If this should be Jacintha! *[Aside.]*

Ran. Ay, 'foregod, did she; which I imagined a good sign at midnight, ay, cousin! So I've invented a long story of a passion I had for her, though I had never seen her before—you know my old way;—and said so many such tender things—

Cla. As you said to me just now.

Ran. Pho! quite in another style, I assure you. It was midnight, and I was in a right cue.

Cla. Well! And what did she answer to all these protestations?

Ran. Why, instead of running into my arms at once, as I expected——

Cla. To be sure.

Ran. 'Gad, like a free-hearted, honest girl, she frankly told me she liked another better than she liked me, that I had something in my face that shew'd I was a gentleman; and she would e'en trust herself with me, if I would give her my word I would convey her to her spark.

Cla. O brave! and how did you bear this?

Ran. Why, curse me, if I am ever angry with a woman for not having a passion for me!

Cla. No!

Ran. Never. I only hate your sex's vain pretence of having no passion at all. Gad, I lov'd the good-natur'd girl for it; took her at her word, stole her out of the window, and this morning made a very honest fellow happy in the possession of her.

Cla. And her name is Jacintha?

Ran. Ha!

Cla. Your amours are no secrets, sir. You see, you might as well have told me all the whole of last night's adventure; for you find I know.

Ran. All! Why, what do you know?

Cla. Nay, nothing, I only know that a gentleman's hat cannot be dropt in a lady's chamber——

Ran. The devil!

Cla. But a husband is such an odd, impertinent, awkward creature, that he will be stumbling over it.

Ran. Here hath been fine work. [*Aside.*] But how, in the name of wonder, should you know all this?

Cla. By being in the same house.

Ran. In the same house!

Cla. Ay, in the same house, a witness of the confusion you have made.

Ran. Frankly's Clarinda, by all that's fortunate! It must be so! [*Aside.*]

Cla. And let me tell you, sir, that even the dull, low-spirited diversions you ridicule in us tame crea-

tures, are preferable to the romantic exploits that only wine can raise you to.

Ran. Yes, cousin: but I'll be even with you.

[*Aside.*

Cla. If you reflect, cousin, you will find a great deal of wit in shocking a lady's modesty, disturbing her quiet, tainting her reputation, and ruining the peace of a whole family.

Ran. To be sure.

Cla. These are the high-mettled pleasures of you men of spirit, that the insipidity of the virtuous can never arrive at. And can you in reality think your Burgundy, and your Bacchus, your Venus, and your Loves, an excuse for all this? Fie, cousin, fie!

Ran. No, cousin.

Cla. What, dumb! I am glad you have modesty enough left not to go about to excuse yourself.

Ran. It is as you say; when we are sober and reflect but ever so little on the follies we commit, we are ashamed and sorry; and yet the very next minute we run again into the same absurdities.

Cla. What! moralizing, cousin! ha, ha, ha!

Ran. What you know is not half, not a hundredth part of the mischief of my last night's frolic; and yet the very next petticoat I saw this morning I must follow it, and be damn'd to me; though, for aught I know, poor Frankly's life may depend upon it.

Cla. Whose life, sir?

Ran. And here do I stand prating to you now.

Cla. Pray, good cousin, explain yourself.

Ran. Good cousin! she has it. [*Aside.*] Why, whilst I was making off with the wench, Bellamy and he were quarrelling about her; and though Jacintha and I made all the haste we could, we did not get to them before—

Cla. Before what? I'm frighten'd out of my wits!

Ran. Not that Frankly cared three half-pence for the girl.

Cla. But there was no mischief done, I hope?

Ran. Pho! a slight scratch; nothing at all, as the

surgeon said : though he was but a queer-looking sort of a bitch of a surgeon, neither.

Cla. Good God ! why, he should have the best that can be found in London.

Ran. Ay, indeed, so he should ; that was what I was going for when I saw you. [*Sits down.*] They are all at Jack Meggot's hard by, and you will keep me here.

Cla. I keep you here ! For Heaven's sake be gone.

Ran. Your tea is a damn'd while a coming.

Cla. You shall have no tea now, I assure you.

Ran. Nay ! one dish.

Cla. No, positively you shall not stay.

Ran. Your commands are absolute, madam.

[*Going.*]

Cla. Then Frankly is true, and I only am to blame.

Ran. [*Returns.*] But I beg ten thousand pardons, cousin, that I should forget——

Cla. Forget what ?

Ran. Forget to salute you.

Cla. Pshaw ! how can you trifle at such a time as this ?

Ran. A trifle ! wrong not your beauty.

Cla. Lord, how teasing you are. There.

Ran. [*Kisses her.*] Poor thing ! how uneasy she is. Nay, no ceremony, you shall not stir a step with me.

Cla. I do not intend it. This is downright provoking. [*Exit Ranger.*] Who's there ?

Enter Landlady.

Land. Madam, did your ladyship call ?

Cla. Does one Mr. Meggot live in this neighbourhood ?

Land. Yes, madam, a fine gentleman, and keeps a noble house, and a world of company.

Cla. Very well ; I don't want his history. I wonder my servants are not come yet.

Land. Lack-a-day, madam, they are all below.

Cla. Send up one then with a card to me. I must know the truth of this immediately. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT V. SCENE I.

A Room in Mr. STRICTLAND's House. Mr. and Mrs. STRICTLAND discovered; she weeping, and he writing.

Mrs. Strickland. HEIGH ho!

Strict. What can possibly be the occasion of that sigh, madam? you have yourself agreed to a maintenance, and a maintenance no duchess need be ashamed of.

Mrs. Str. But the extremities of provocation that drove me to that agreement——

Strict. Were the effect of your own follies. Why do you disturb me? *[Writes on.*

Mrs. Str. I would not willingly give you a moment's uneasiness; I but desire a fair and equal hearing: and if I satisfy you not in every point, then abandon me, discard me to the world, and its malicious tongues.

Strict. What was it you said? Damn this pen.

Mrs. Str. I say, Mr. Strickland, I would only——

Strict. You would only—— You would only repeat what you have been saying this hour, I am innocent; and when I shewed you the letter I had taken from your maid, what was then your poor evasion, but that it was to Clarinda, and you were innocent.

Mrs. Str. Heaven knows, I am innocent.

Strict. But I know your Clarinda, your woman of honour, is your blind, your cover, your——But why do I distract myself about a woman I have no longer any concern with? Here, madam, is your fate. A letter to your brother in the country.

Mrs. Str. Sir——

Strict. I have told him what a sister he has to receive, and how to bid her welcome.

Mrs. Str. Then my ruin is complete. My brother!

Strict. I must vindicate my own honour, else what will the world say?

Mrs. Str. That brother was my only hope, my only

ground of patience. In his retirement I hoped my name might have been safe, and slept, till by some happy means you might at length have known me innocent, and pitied me.

Strict. Retirement! pretty soul! no, no; that face was never made for retirement; it is another sort of retiring you are fittest for. Ha! hark! What's that? [*A knocking at the door.*] Two gentle taps—and why but two? Was that the signal, madam? Stir not, on your life.

Mrs. Str. Give me resolution, Heaven, to bear this usage, and keep it secret from the world.

[*Aside.*
Strict. I will have no signs, no items, no hem to tell him I am here. Ha! another tap. The gentleman is in haste, I find. [*Opens the door, and enter TESTER.*] Tester! Why did you not come in, rascal? [*Beats him.*] All vexations meet to cross me.

Test. Lord, sir! what do you strike me for? my mistress ordered me never to come in where she was, without first knocking at the door.

Strict. Oh, cunning devil! Tester is too honest to be trusted.

Mrs. Str. Unhappy man! will nothing undeceive him?

[*Aside.*

Test. Sir, here is a letter.

Strict. To my wife?

Test. No, sir, to you. The servant waits below.

Strict. Art sure it is a servant?

Test. Sir! [*Staring.*] it is Mr. Buckle, sir.

Strict. I am mad: I know not what to say, or do, or think. But let's read. [*Reads to himself.*

' SIR,

' We cannot bear to reflect that Mrs. Strickland
' may possibly be ruined in your esteem, and in the
' voice of the world, only by the confusion which
' our affairs have made in your family, without of-
' fering all within our power to clear the misun-
' derstanding between you. If you will give your-
' self the trouble but to step to Mr. Meggot's, where

'all parties will be, we doubt not but we can entirely
'satisfy your most flagrant suspicion, to the honour of
'Mrs. Strictland, and the quiet of your lives.

'JACINTHA, JOHN BELLAMY.'

Hey! Here is the whole gang witnessing for one another. They think I am an ass, and will be led by the nose to believe every thing. Call me a chair. [*Exit Tester.*] Yes, I will go to this rendezvous of enemies—I will—and find out all her plots, her artifices and contrivances: it will clear my conduct to her brother, and all her friends. [*Exit Mr. Strictland.*]

Mrs. Str. Gone so abruptly! What can that letter be about? no matter; there's no way left to make us easy but by my disgrace, and I must learn to suffer; time and innocence will teach me to bear it patiently.

Enter LUCETTA.

Luc. Mrs. Bellamy, madam, (for my young lady is married) begs you would follow Mr. Strictland to Mr. Meggot's; she makes no doubt but she shall be able to make you and my master easy.

Mrs. Str. But how came she to know any thing of the matter?

Luc. I have been with them, madam; I could not bear to see so good a lady ill-treated.

Mrs. Str. I am indeed, Lucetta, ill-treated: but I hope this day will be the last of it.

Luc. Madam Clarinda and Mr. Frankly will be there: and the young gentleman, madam who was with you in this room last night.

Mrs. Str. Ha! if he's there, there may be hopes; and it is worth the trying.

Luc. Dear lady, let me call a chair.

Mrs. Str. I go with you. I cannot be more wretched than I am. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

A Room in J. MEGGOT'S House. Enter FRANKLY, RANGER, BELLAMY, JACINTHA, and J. MEGGOT.

Fran. Oh, Ranger, this is news indeed! your cousin, and a lady of such fortune!

Ran. I have done the business for you : I tell you she's your own. She loves you.

Fran. *You make my heart dance with joy* " Words " are too faint to tell the joy I feel."

Ran. I have put that heart of hers into such a flutter, that I'll lay a hundred guineas, with the assistance which this lady has promised me, I fix her yours directly.

Jac. Ay, ay, Mr. Frankly, we have a design upon her which cannot fail. But you must obey orders.

Fran. Most willingly : but remember, dear lady, I have more than life at stake.

Jac. Away then into the next room ; for she is this instant coming hither.

Fran. Hither! you surprise me more and more,

Jac. Here is a message from her, by which she desires leave to wait on me this afternoon.

Ran. Only for the chance of seeing you here, I assure ye.

Fran. Let me hug thee ; though I know not how to believe it.

Ran. Psha! pr'ythee don't stifle me ! It is a busy day, a very busy day.

J. Meg. Thou art the most unaccountable creature in life.

Ran. But the most lucky one, Jack, if I succeed for Frankly as I have for Bellamy, and my heart whispers me I shall. Come in, most noble Mr. Buckle : what have you to propose ?

Enter BUCKLE.

Buc. A lady, madam, in a chair, says her name is Clarinda.

Jac. Desire her to walk up.

Bel. How could you let her wait? [*Exit Buckle.* You must excuse him, madam ; Buckle is a true bachelor's servant, and knows no manners.

Jac. Away, away, Mr. Frankly, and stay till I call you. A rap with my fan shall be the signal. [*Exit Frankly.*] We make very free with your house, Mr. Meggot.

J. Meg. Oh, you could not oblige me more.

Enter CLARINDA.

Cla. Dear Mrs. Bellamy, pity my confusion. I am to wish you joy and ask your pardon all in a breath. I know not what to say; I am quite asham'd of my last night's behaviour.

Jac. Come, come, Clarinda, it is all well; all is over and forgot. Mr. Bellamy—— [*Salute.*

Cla. I wish you joy, sir, with all my heart, and should have been very sorry if any folly of mine had prevented it.

Bel. Madam, I am oblig'd to you.

Cla. I see nothing of Mr. Frankly! my mind mis-gives me. [*Aside.*

Ran. And so, you came hither purely out of friendship, good-nature, and humility.

Cla. Purely.

Ran. To confess your offences, to beg pardon, and to make reparation.

Cla. Purely. Is this any thing so extraordinary?

J. Meg. The most so of any thing in life, I think.

Ran. A very whimsical business for so fine a lady, and an errand you seldom went on before, I fancy, my dear cousin.

Jac. Never, I dare swear, if I may judge by the awkward concern she shews in delivering it.

Cla. Concern! Lard, well, I protest, you are all exceeding pretty company! Being settled for life, Jacintha, gives an ease to the mind that brightens conversation strangely.

Jac. I am sorry, with all my heart, you are not in the same condition; for as you are, my dear, you are horribly *chagrine*.

Ran. But with a little of our help, madam, the lady may recover, and be very good company.

Cla. Hum! What does he mean, Mr. Bellamy?

Bel. Ask him, madam.

Cla. Indeed I shall not give myself the trouble.

Jac. Then you know what he means.

Cla. Something impertinent, I suppose, not worth explaining.

Jac. It is something you won't let him explain, I find.

Enter BUCKLE, and whispers MEGGOT.

J. Meg. Very well. Desire him to walk into the parlour. Madam, the gentleman is below.

Jac. Then every one to your posts. You know your cues.

Ran. I warrant ye. [*Exeunt Gentlemen.*]

Cla. All gone! I'm glad of it, for I want to speak to you.

Jac. And I, my dear Clarinda, have something which I do not know how to tell you; but it must be known sooner or later.

Cla. What's the matter?

Jac. Poor Mr. Frankly—

Cla. You fright me out of my senses!

Jac. Has no wounds but what you can cure. Ha, ha, ha!

Cla. Psha! I am angry.

Jac. Psha! you are pleased: and will be more so, when I tell you, this man, whom fortune has thrown in your way, is, in rank and temper, the man in the world who suits you best for a husband.

Cla. Husband! I say, husband, indeed! Where will this end? [*Aside.*]

Jac. His very soul is yours, and he only waits an opportunity of telling you so. He is in the next room. Shall I call him in?

Cla. My dear girl, hold!

Jac. How foolish is this coyness now, Clarinda! If the men were here indeed, something might be said—And so, Mr. Frankly—

Cla. How can you be so teasing?

Jac. Nay, I am in downright earnest: and, to shew how particular I have been in my enquiries, “though “I know you have a spirit above regarding, the “modish, paltry way of a Smithfield bagain”—his fortune—

Cla. I don't care what his fortune is.

Jac. Don't you so? Then you are farther gone than I thought you were.

Cla. No, psha! pr'ythee, I don't mean so neither.

Jac. I don't care what you mean: but you won't like him the worse, I hope, for having a fortune superior to your own. Now shall I call him in?

Cla. Pho, dear girl—Some other time.

Jac. [*Raps with her fan.*] That's the signal, and here he is. You shall not stir: I positively will leave you together. [*Exit* Jacintha.]

Enter FRANKLY.

Fran. Pardon this freedom, madam: but I hope our having so luckily met with a common friend in Mrs. Bellamy—

Cla. Sir!

Fran. Makes any farther apology for my behaviour last night absolutely unnecessary.

Cla. So far, Mr. Frankly, that I think the apology should be rather on my side, for the impertinent bustle I made about her.

Fran. This behaviour gives me hopes, madam: pardon the construction—but from the little bustle you made about the lady, may I not hope you was not quite indifferent about the gentleman?

Cla. Have a care of being too sanguine in your hopes; might not a love of power, or the satisfaction of shewing that power, or the dear pleasure of abusing that power; might not these have been foundation enough for more than what I did?

Fran. Charming woman! With most of your sex, I grant, they might, but not with you. Whatever power your beauty gives, your good-nature will allow you no other use of it than to oblige.

Cla. This is the height of compliment, Mr. Frankly.

Fran. Not, in my opinion, I assure you, madam; and I am now going to put it to the trial.

Cla. What is he going to say now? [*Aside.*]

Fran. What is it that ails me that I cannot speak? Psha! he here! [*Aside.*]

Enter RANGER.

Interrupted! impertinent!

Ran. There is no sight so ridiculous as a pair of your true lovers. Here are you two now, bowing and cringing, and keeping a passion secret from one another, that is no secret to all the house beside. And if you don't make the matter up immediately, it will be all over the town within these two hours?

Cla. What do you mean?

Fran. Ranger—

Ran. Do you be quiet, can't ye? [*Aside.*] But it is over, I suppose, cousin, and you have given him your consent.

Cla. Sir, the liberties you're pleas'd to take with me—

Ran. Oh! in your airs still, are you? Why then, Mr. Frankly, there is a certain letter of yours, sir, to this lady.—

Cla. A letter to me!

Ran. Ay! to you, madam.

Fran. Ha! what of that letter?

Ran. It is only fallen into Mr. Strictland's hands, that is all: and he has read it.

Fran. Read it!

Ran. Ay, read it to all his family at home, and to all the company below: and if some stop be not put to it, it will be read in all the coffee-houses in town.

Fran. A stop! this sword shall put a stop to it, or I will perish in the attempt.

Ran. But will that sword put a stop to the talk of the town?—Only make it talk the faster, take my word for it.

Cla. This is all a trick.

Ran. A trick! Is it so; you shall soon see that, my fine cousin. [*Exit Ranger.*]

Fran. It is but too true, I fear. There is such a letter, which I gave Lucetta. Can you forgive me? Was I much to blame, when I could neither see nor hear of you?

Cla. [*Tenderly.*] You give yourself, Mr. Frankly, a thousand more uneasinesses than you need about me.

Fran. If this uneasiness but convinces you how much I love you—Interrupted again!

Cla. This is downright malice. [*Aside.*

Enter RANGER, followed by JACINTHA, Mr. STRICTLAND, BELLAMY, and MEGGOT.

Ran. Enter, enter, gentlemen and lady. Now you shall see whether this is a trick or no.

Cla. Mr. Stricland here! What is all this?

Jac. Do not be uneasy, my dear; we will explain it to you.

Fran. I cannot bear this trifling, Ranger, when my heart is on the rack.

Ran. Come this way then, and learn.

[*Jacintha, Clarinda, Frankly and Ranger retire.*

Mr. Stricland, Bellamy, and Meggot advance.

Strict. Why, I know not well what to say. This has a face. 'This letter may as well agree with Clarinda, as with my wife, as you have told the story; and Lucetta explained it so: but she, for a sixpenny-piece, would have constru'd it the other way.

J. Meg. But, sir, if we produce this Mr Frankly to you, and he owns himself the author of this letter—

Bel. And if Clarinda likewise be brought before your face to encourage his addresses, there can be no further room for doubt.

Strict. No. Let that appear, and I shall, I think I shall be satisfied—But yet it cannot be—

Bel. Why not? Hear me, sir. [*They talk.*

[*Jacintha, Clarinda, Frankly, and Ranger advance.*

Jac. In short, Clarinda, unless the affair is made up directly, a separation, with all the obloquy on her side, must be the consequence.

Cla. Poor Mrs. Stricland! I pity her: but for him, he deserves all he feels, were it ten times what it is.

Jac. It is for her sake only that we beg of you both to bear his impertinence.

Cla. With all my heart. You will do what you please with me.

Fran. Generous creature!

Strict. Ha! here she is, and with her the very man

I saw deliver the letter to Lucetta. I do begin to fear I have made myself a fool. Now for the proof.— Here is a letter, sir, which has given me great disturbance, and these gentlemen assure me it was writ by you.

Fran. That letter, sir, upon my honour, I left this morning with Lucetta, for this lady.

Strict. For that lady! and Frankly, the name at the bottom, is not feign'd, but your real name?

Fran. Frankly is my name.

Strict. I see, I feel myself ridiculous.

Jac. Now, Mr. Strictland, I hope—

J. Meg. Ay, ay; a clear case.

Strict. I am satisfied, and will go this instant to Mrs. Strictland.

Ran. Why then the devil fetch me if this would satisfy me.

Strict. What's that?

Ran. Nay, nothing; it is no affair of mine.

Bel. What do you mean, Ranger?

Strict. Ay, what do you mean? I will know before I stir.

Ran. With all my heart, sir. Cannot you see that all this may be a concerted matter between them?

Fran. Ranger, you know I can resent.

Strict. Go on; I will defend you, let who will resent it.

Ran. Why then, sir, I declare myself your friend: and were I as you, nothing but their immediate marriage should convince me.

Strict. Sir, you're right, and are my friend indeed. Give me your hand.

Ran. Nay, were I to hear her say, I, Clarinda, take thee, Charles, I would not believe them, 'till I saw them a-bed together. Now resent it as you will.

Strict. Ay, sir, as you will: but nothing less shall convince me; and so, my fine lady, if you are in earnest—

Cla. Sure, Mr. Strictland—

Strict. Nay, no flouncing; you cannot escape.

Ran. Why, Frankly, hast no soul?

Fran. I pity her confusion.

Ran. Pity her confusion!—the man's a fool—Here, take her hand.

Fran. Thus, on my knees, then, let me ravish, with your hand, your heart.

Cla. Ravish it you cannot; for it is with all my heart I give it you.

Strict. I am satisfied.

Cla. And so am I, now it is once over.

Ran. And so am I, my dainty cousin; and I wish you joy of a man your whole sex would go to cuffs for, if they knew him but half so well as I do—Ha! she's here; this is more than I bargain'd for. [*Aside.*

JACINTHA leads in Mrs. STRICTLAND.

Strict. [*Embracing Mrs. Strickland.*] Madam, reproach me not with my folly, and you shall never hear of it again.

Mrs. Str. Reproach you! no! if ever you hear the least reflection pass my lips, forsake me in that instant; or, what would yet be worse, suspect again.

Strict. It is enough. I am ashamed to talk to thee. This letter, which I wrote to your brother, thus I tear in pieces, and with it part for ever with my jealousy.

Mrs. Str. This is a joy indeed! as great as unexpected. Yet there is one thing wanting, to make it lasting.

Ran. What the devil is coming now? [*Aside.*

Mrs. Str. Be assur'd, every other suspicion of me was as unjust as your last: though, perhaps, you had more foundations for your fears.

Ran. She won't tell, sure, for her own sake. [*Aside.*

Mrs. Str. All must be clear'd before my heart will be at ease.

Ran. It looks plaguy like it, though! [*Aside.*

Strict. What mean you? I am all attention.

Mrs. Str. There was a man, as you suspected, in my chamber last night.

Strict. Ha! take care, I shall relapse.

Mrs. Str. That gentleman was he——

Ran. Here is a devil for you! [*Aside.*

Mrs. Str. Let him explain the rest.

Ran. A frolic! a mere frolic, on my life.

Strict. A frolic! Zounds! * [*They interpose.*]

Ran. Nay, don't let us quarrel the very moment you declar'd yourself my friend. There was no harm done, I promise you. Nay, never frown. After I have told my story, any satisfaction you are pleas'd to ask, I shall be ready to give.

Strict. Be quick, then, and ease me of my pain.

Ran. Why, then, as I was strolling about last night upon the look out, I must confess, chance, and chance only, convey'd me to your house; where I espied a ladder of ropes most invitingly fasten'd to the window—

Jac. Which ladder I had fastened for my escape.

Strict. Proceed.

Ran. Up mounted I, and up I should have gone, if it had been in the garret; *it's all one to Ranget.* I open'd one door, then another, and to my great surprise, the whole house was silent; at last, I stole into a room where this lady was undressing.

Strict. 'Sdeath and the devil! you did not dare sure——

Ran. I don't know whether I had dared, or no, if I had not heard the maid say something of her master's being jealous. Oh, damn me, thought I, then the work is half done to my hands.——

Jac. Do you mind that, Mr. Strictland?

Strict. I do——I do most feelingly.

Ran. The maid grew saucy, and most conveniently to my wishes, was turn'd out of the room; and if you had not had the best wife in the world——

Strict. 'Ounds, sir, but what right have you——

Ran. What right, sir? if you will be jealous of your wife without a cause; if you will be out at that time of night, when you might have been so much better employed at home; we young fellows think we have a right——

Strict. No joking, I beseech you; you know not what I feel.

Ran. Then seriously, I was mad, or drunk enough

call it which you will, to be very rude to this lady, for which I ask both her pardon and yours. I am an odd sort of a fellow, perhaps; but I am above telling you or any man a lie, damn me, if I am not.

Strict. I must, I cannot but believe you; and for the future, madam, you shall find a heart ready to love and trust you. No tears, I beg; I cannot bear them.

Mrs. Str. I cannot speak, and yet there is a favour, sir—

Strict. I understand you; and, as a proof of the sincerity with which I speak, I beg it as a favour, of this lady in particular, [*To Clarinda*] and of all the company in general, to return to my house immediately, where every thing, Mr. Bellamy, shall be settled to your entire satisfaction. No thanks, I have not deserv'd them.

J. Meg. I beg your pardon, sir, the fiddles are ready; Mrs. Bellamy has promis'd me her hand, and I won't part with one of you till midnight; and if you are as well satisfied as you pretend to be, let our friend Rattle here begin the ball with Mrs. Strictland; for he seems to be the hero of the day.

Strict. As you and the company please.

Ran. Why this is honest; continue but in this humour, and faith, sir, you may trust me to run about your house like a spaniel. I cannot sufficiently admire at the whimsicalness of my good fortune, in being so instrumental to this general happiness. Bellamy, Frankly, I wish you joy with all my heart, though I had rather you should be married than I, for all that. Never did matrimony appear to me with a smile upon her face till this instant.

Sure joys for ever wait each happy pair,

When sense the man, and virtue crowns the fair,

And kind compliance proves their mutual care.

[A dance. Exeunt omnes.]

EPILOGUE.

Written by Mr. GARRICK.

*THOUGH the young smarts, I see, begin to sneer,
And the old sinners cast a nicked leer,
Be not alarm'd, ye fair--You're nought to fear.
No wanton hint, no loose ambiguous sense,
Shall flatter vicious taste at your expence.
Leaving for once these shameless arts in vogue,
We give a fable for the epilogue.*

*An ass there was, our author bade me say,
Who needs must write--He did--and wrote a play.
The parts were cast to various beasts and fowl;
Their stage a barn;--the manager an owl.
The house was cramm'd at six, with friends and foes;
Rakes, wits, and critics, citizens, and beaux.
These characters appeared in different shapes
Of tigers, foxes, horses, bulls, and apes;
With others, too, of lower rank and station:
A perfect abstract of the brute creation.
Each, as he felt, mark'd out the author's faults,
And thus the connoisseurs express'd their thoughts.
The critic-urs first snarl'd--the rules are broke,
Time, place, and action, sacrific'd to joke.
The goats cry'd out; 'twas formal, dull, and chaste--
Not writ for beasts of gallantry and taste.
The horned cattle were in piteous taking,
At fornication, rapes, and cuckold-making.
The tigers swore, he wanted fire and passion;
The apes condemn'd--because it was the fashion.
The generous steeds allow'd him proper merit:
Here mark'd his faults, and there approv'd his spirit.
While brother bards bray'd forth with usual spleen,
And, as they heard, exploded every scene.
When Reynard's thoughts were ask'd, the shrugging sage,
Fam'd for hypocrisy, and worn with age,
Condemn'd the shameless licence of the stage,
At which the monkey skip'd from box to box;
And whisper'd round the judgment of the fox;
Abus'd the moderns, talk'd of Rome and Greece;
Bilk'd every box-keeper; and damn'd the piece.
Now every fable has a moral to it--
Be churchman, statesman, any thing--but poet.
In law, or physic, quack in what you will,
Cant and grimace conceal the want of skill:
Secure in these, his gravity may pass--
But here no artifice can hide the ass.*

THE END.

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